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Portugal and the Left

Confounding cynicism about low turn-out and political apathy, the Portuguese electorate has shown that it takes democracy seriously – perhaps more seriously than the revolution's many detractors. Political liberty is a precious gain for a people who languished in an imperial dungeon state, ignored by Europe, for so many years. And it is appropriate that the party which understands this best – the Socialist Party – should have continued to make the strongest showing. Over the year that has elapsed since the last vote, there has been an ugly right-wing revival fuelled by Catholic superstition and the undigested traditions of fascism. There has also been a disciplined but stupid and ill-timed effort at cementing a permanent communist-cum-military stewardship of Portugal's future. Both these two challenges have been met and rebuffed – for the moment. If there was an element of pathos during the election campaign, then it certainly came from Dr Alvaro Cunhal, who offered an electoral alliance to a party which he had only recently ceased to denounce as a tool of the CIA. The overall performance of Communist and Communist-front candidates does in fact show a decline from last year, contrary to general interpretation. It is probable that Moscow and her supporters will not attempt another 'try-on' after the mauling they received last November. But the issue here, as elsewhere in Europe, is not so much the party as the nature of its support. The solid Communist Red belt of industrial Lisbon should not be excluded from the new political settlement just because its leaders are soft on Stalinism. The most sensitive Socialist task will be to wean the working-class away from such dangerous illusions.

This cannot be done if common cause is made with the pseudo-liberals of the Popular Democratic Party, or the crypto-fascists of the 'Centre Democrats' who have not even got the courage to call themselves conservatives, but do not scruple to recruit former functionaries of the expired dictatorship and even to give moral cover to the right-wing terrorists who operate from Spain. Any truck with such forces will spell disaster for Socialist aspirations.

More than almost any other part of Europe, Portugal has been failed totally by capitalism. It has been kept in a state of subjection and underdevelopment matched only by southern Italy, and preyed upon by multinational businesses which were only too happy to take advantage of a well-policed work force. As well as being a colonial power Portugal was also a colony, and it is this inheritance which must now be confronted. Mass illiteracy is still present. Poverty and disease are common and scarcely alleviated. Only the fatalism about these things has really been abolished, and the ownership of certain parts of the slum has changed hands. There can be no question of handing confiscated land and property back to the former owners, except in the case of newspapers seized by minority groups. The parties which defend and represent those who used to act as managers for foreign exploitation (and still do, as best they can) should remain in permanent opposition. So should those who, with General Spínola, fought a rearguard action against decolonisation and even planned a counter-coup of their own. The dustbin of history may be an over-worked metaphor but if ever any class belonged in it, it is the old Portuguese commercial oligarchy.

This places Dr Soares in a position of enormous responsibility. To make a coalition with his enemies would put Portugal on the road to an Italian or Argentine comic-opera instability with the unfunny prospect of another military intervention at the end of it. To go it alone will be to risk a vicious middle-class backlash. But he will have to attempt it, and if necessary he will have to make use of the otherwise isolated parties to his Left. Until they display some of the intelligence acquired by their French, Italian or Spanish counterparts, the Communists can expect only a subordinate and non-governmental role. But if they will agree to defend the Socialist Party from the reactionaries, then Portugal can continue its efforts to combine socialism and democracy. British Tories and businessmen made a good thing out of Portugal's wretched past. Labour should see the new experiment as a cause worth fighting for.

Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

Back to Work with Labour

Parliament reconvened this week in a sober, you might say shell-shocked, state. My hackney cab nosed its way through a crowd of jeering French schoolgirls who had gathered at the gates of the Palace Yard to tease the returning Members. One of them peered in at my window and shouted 'Breteesh Leyland, Breteesh Leyland!' while the rest fell about in paroxysms of laughter. I closed my eyes and thought of sterling. And then, to steady myself, I remembered how we had saved the French twice this century, and what little thanks we got. One of this week's NS contributors, Siegfried Sassoon, remarked after the Great War that he would never go to fight again - unless it was against the French.

But - back to work. And by 'back to work' the Labour leaders do not mean that they offer any great prospect of work itself, or of improved standard of living. They mean simply that unless the unions play ball with the Chancellor they will be responsible for the collapse of the country, the demise of the pound, for destroying 'society as we know it'. Jack Jones's speech over the weekend may have been calculated, rather than a mere emotional outburst; but it was certainly lurid in its details. Unless we beat inflation, there's going to be hyperinflation, a situation as in pre-war Germany where 'a kilo of potatoes was worth to some more than the family silver, a side of pork more than a grand piano, a prostitute in the family was better than an infant corpse, theft was preferable to starvation, warmth was finer than honour, clothing more essential than democracy, and food more needed than freedom'.

That, indeed, is oratory, the rhetoric of crisis. It makes one wonder, since things after all *could* be worse, just how many more shots Jones has in his locker. One can only hope that the Government's policies do work, since if they do not, the labour leadership may have called the ranks to order too peremptorily, too soon. Ideally, they would like all debate to cease, and to a certain extent they are succeeding. On a trivial level, there was Leslie Huckfield, newly appointed to the Government, withdrawing his mildly critical article on the Budget from last week's *Tribune*. 'Broadly', Huckfield had been going to say, 'I believe that the Government's economic strategy, including the recent Budget, deserves sympathy if not support.' *If not support?* This is no way for a parliamentary under-secretary of state to talk. Huckfield had to ask his editor to defer publication of his piece, for what he called substantial updating. 'For the moment, at least,' commented *Tribune* ambiguously, 'those tantalising words are all that we will hear from Mr Huckfield for some time.'

But it is not just the placemen who are

being responsible. On Monday the Financial and Economic Subcommittee of the NEC met to discuss their part of Labour's programme for 1976, due to be published in June. There was a section on sterling in the draft. It was not, I am told, a very interesting section, but it was thought that if published it would be derogatory to sterling. So it was dropped, and Labour's programme will consequently have nothing to say about sterling. This was considered to be a very statesmanlike move, a vindication of the NEC.

I prefer the less statesmanlike elements of the party, such as Dennis Canavan, who in the first PM's question of the session asked whether James Callaghan did not agree that 'an alternative socialist solution to the nation's unemployment problem might be forthcoming if he did not restrict his Westminster job-creation scheme by bestowing most of his privileges and patronage on those who supported him in the recent leadership election'. It was a gratuitously rude question, which received the interesting reply: 'I assure my hon. Friend that that is not the way to get a job.'

To the Left, the handling of the Budget and the negotiations with the unions have been disastrous. It is admitted by the Treasury that uncertainty over the pay talks has caused much of the recent sterling crisis. Was it not then a serious mistake on the part of Denis Healey to include the tax/pay trade-off in the Budget? It is argued that, had the proposal been more democratically sired, if Budgets were not prepared with such secrecy, it would have been pointed out to those who had devised the trade-off just what the consequences for sterling were likely to be. Against this, it is said that the unions knew, everybody knew, what the Budget was going to contain, and the union leaders should not now feign surprise. The proposed trade-off had been leaked well in advance.

Whatever the truth, it is unlikely that a conditional Budget will be tried again. Healey must take responsibility for at least

part of the recent fall of sterling, and for the panic over the pay talks. The present agreement does not run out till July, and the special TUC conference is not till June. But because of the pound the decision over Phase Two must effectively be taken now. The Left consider this anti-democratic, and typical of Healey's bullying style. They see the unions as being blackmailed, forced unfairly to take responsibility for the Government's mistakes. It is also suggested that in the early stages after the Budget, devaluation was partly engineered by the Treasury in order to force the unions into line.

There are three dominant views in Westminster about the state of the economy. The Government view rests entirely on the need to combat inflation, and there is a monotonous insistence on pay policy as the chief means to secure this end. The Tory view, equally monotonous, calls for 'real' cuts in public expenditure, although the Tories were hopelessly unclear in debate as to how they would achieve such cuts without causing massive unemployment. The third view is not the exclusive property of the Left, although it is generally considered as such. It denies the Tory view that the country is overtaxed (on figures published this week it appears that Britain is one of the lowest-taxed European countries) and that public expenditure must be the whipping-boy. It calls for what used to be called import controls, but has now been brightly renamed 'planned growth of imports'. To this list has now been added a proposal for dealing with the problem of 'hot money'. If the sterling crisis is in part the fault of the Government, it has also made the Left look again at the role of the City.

The Left sees the City as an albatross around the country's neck. For historical reasons it is one of the world's great banking centres, attracting a mass of speculative money which is quite out of proportion to the size of the economy. The Left argues that the benefit in terms of invisible earnings, the role played by 'hot money', is far outweighed by its deleterious effects: the vulnerability of the pound, the low level of industrial investment, the consequently high level of unemployment. To the Government, to Joel Barnett for instance, the argument about speculation is an evasion of the central issue - which is inflation. To the Left, inflation is not primarily linked with pay rates, and if the present pay policy of the Government comes off, and the cost of wages consequently drops, then somebody is going to have to explain to the unions why, after the sacrifices they have made, inflation continues.

And that, indeed, is the problem which must be foremost in the minds of the union leaders as they negotiate with the Government. For it is highly unlikely that the present level of industrial peace can continue indefinitely. It is not a question of settling terms for the next year. It's a matter of concluding the present year's bargain as well. At the moment, the bargain looks a fairly shabby affair. Its support is precarious. And when the mildest criticism is made, the pound gets a fit of the vapours. Not surprisingly, then, the Callaghan Administration is trying to rule by economic fear. This is hardly the best basis for government.

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Barbara Wootton

A Proposal for the Next Pay Phase

The Chancellor and the TUC General Council appear now to be virtually agreed that the next phase of pay policy is to be a straight percentage increase: that is to say, that the principle that 'to him that hath shall be given' is to run right through the system, presumably at least up to a ceiling yet to be determined. But there are still dissentient voices in the wings to be reckoned with before everything is signed and sealed at the special TUC conference arranged for June. At one extreme miners are shouting for a return to free collective bargaining while at the other end of the spectrum the muffled cries of the very low paid surely deserve to be heard – for to them, even with the promised tax reliefs, percentage increases will be minuscule.

Is it too late to suggest that their conflicts could be resolved, and a more equitable result be achieved, if we were to remind ourselves of what we accepted barely now ten years ago in a much less menacing economic situation than faces us now? Under the Prices and Incomes Act of 1966 the Government fixed a percentage norm, limiting pay increases in general. So long as the Act remained in force, these limits were very tough indeed, ranging in different years from nil to a maximum of 3 per cent. But at the same time exceptional

increases above the norm were also allowed so long as they complied with one of the four following conditions:

(1) Where the employees concerned, for example by accepting more exacting work or a major change in working practices, make a direct contribution towards increasing productivity in the particular firm or industry. Even in such cases some of the benefit should accrue to the community as a whole in the form of lower prices.

(2) Where it is essential in the national interest to secure a change in the distribution of manpower (or to prevent a change which would otherwise take place) and a pay increase would be both necessary and effective for this purpose.

(3) Where there is general recognition that existing wage and salary levels are too low to maintain a reasonable standard of living.

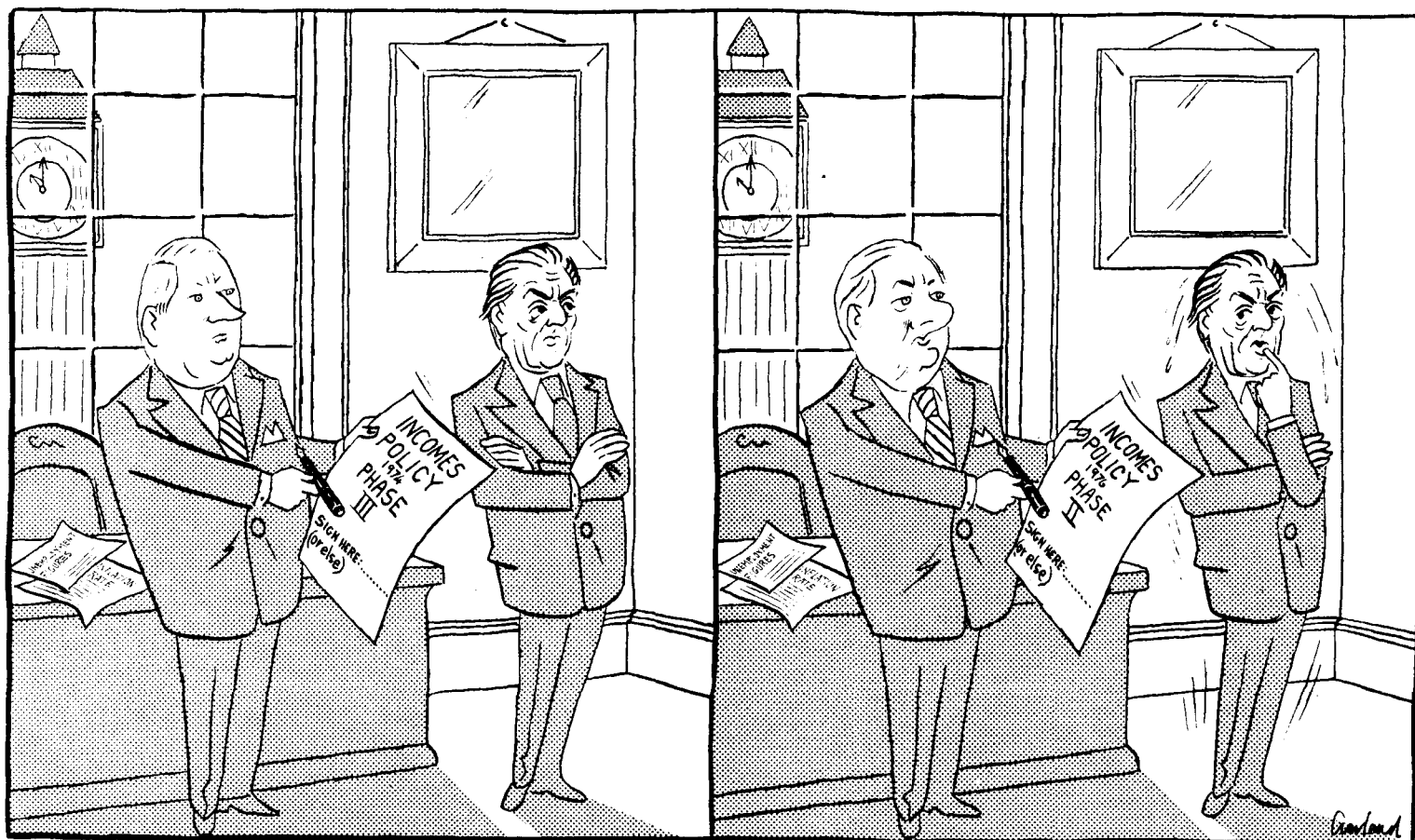
(4) Where there is widespread recognition that the pay of a certain group of workers has fallen seriously out of line with the level of remuneration for similar work and needs in the national interest to be improved.

True, these rules were part of a statutory policy, which is perhaps why they have been discreetly forgotten; and if they were sometimes breached upon the shop floor that is a matter that we have learnt to deal with under the present policy. So why should not a 'voluntary social contract' also take the

form of a basic norm with similar provisions for exceptional treatment in specified cases? In the event of disputes as to whether a particular claim did or did not satisfy the prescribed conditions, the Conciliation and Arbitration Service might take over the role of the former Prices and Incomes Board, though without its statutory powers.

Today the main complaint of those who are reconciled to some form of restraint is that the flat-rate system has 'distorted differentials'. If this is merely a demand for a return to the *status quo ante*, it is fair to ask: 'ante what?' At any point in history the prevailing wage differentials have been an accidental compound of traditional social conventions, of economic and social pressures, and, in recent years, of the impact of a succession of government-imposed pay policies. At no date can the result be said to have been a divinely ordered model of equity and efficiency, on the re-establishment of which our salvation depends. If, therefore, differentials have been thrown out of gear under the £6 policy, they need to be remoulded into a pattern which, instead of seeking to restore the relationships of yesterday, is justifiable in terms of the needs and standards of today.

In the formulation of such a policy the first step must be to discriminate between two varieties of 'differential': the industrial and the occupational; and it may be convenient to confine the term 'differential' to the latter category, industrial differences being labelled 'relativities'. In general it is, I think, true that the pressures on occupational differentials tend to be more of a social or ethical nature, and therefore commanding of more widespread support than



Spot the difference

those which affect industrial relativities, the latter being mainly influenced by economic forces operating (not always harmoniously) on a national scale. Wage claims have long laid great stress on occupational comparisons, particularly where the claimants are paid less than others doing similar work or where differential for skill or responsibility have been eroded; and these 'anomalies' are favourite subjects for denunciation today.

In recent years, however, a growing tendency to base claims also on changing industrial relativities has become apparent. Thus in the 1973-4 dispute the miners' leaders made much of the fact that the position of coal-mining had dropped in the table of average industrial earnings, and they argued that their members' wages should be raised to a point which would restore the industry to the position of a few years earlier. Argument on these lines, however, attaches a sanctity to the relative position of different industries at a particular moment which can hardly be justified. If all industries were to maintain as of right a fixed position in the hierarchy of earnings, this would obviously impose a stultifying rigidity on industrial development.

The PIB rules clearly did not allow exceptional increases on this last-named ground. On the contrary, rule (2) contemplated the possibility that it might be necessary to disturb industrial comparisons in the event of a serious shortage of manpower in an industry of growing national importance. But the other rules do cover most of the issues on pay policy about which workers appear to feel most passionately today. Rule (1) would reward those whose efforts have been particularly productive, and is therefore justifiable both upon ethical grounds and in the national economic interest. Rule (3) recognises the claim of the very low paid – a matter which arouses much sympathetic reaction both inside and outside the trade union world; and rule (4) deals with what probably provokes a greater sense of injustice than anything else: that is, the sight of other people being paid significantly more money for work identical with one's own. (Assuming that the facts were as stated by the press, this rule would of course have resolved the grievance of the SU Carburettor men in the recent Leyland dispute.)

The only formidable argument to which the PIB rules may be thought to give insufficient weight is the need to improve differentials for skill and responsibility. Perhaps something should be added to them to cover this. But the substitution of a percentage for a flat-rate policy was itself designed as an attempt to resolve precisely that problem. A percentage policy, with prescribed exceptions for cases such as those covered by the PIB rules, would at least make it possible both to keep the standard norm low enough to be non-inflationary, and at the same time to satisfy the most bitterly felt grievances arising from the present situation. And, on top of all that, it would even have something to offer to those who cannot wait to see the restoration of free collective bargaining; for it would at least open the door to bargaining within the limits of the prescribed exceptions to the basic percentage.

To these proposals I would add two post-scripts. First, so long as Parliament has the last word, I do not think we need worry about the constitutional propriety of important decisions concerning income tax being held up until the later stages of the Finance Bill. Nevertheless it does seem unfair that changes in the tax threshold and allowances (affecting, for example, widows and many persons with small investment incomes) should be contingent upon an agreement concerned only with the pay of employed persons. Although the Budget does propose some concessions to widows and the less affluent pensioners, what relevance can an agreement between government and unions about workers' pay have to the entitlement of non-wage earners to reliefs of general applicability?

Second, *a pay policy is not an incomes policy*. Why should only increases in earned

incomes be subject to a rigid ceiling? Why not a maximum rise limited to 3 per cent for everybody, no matter where he gets his income from? Dividend limitation is no answer, inasmuch as the distribution of dividends bears a totally fortuitous relation to the affluence of the recipient. Nor is the inequity as between earner and investor rectified by the progressive rates of income tax.

Contrast the position of a business executive earning £8,500 a year (or whatever any future cut-off point may be). Not a penny more may he have. But his neighbour with exactly the same income from investments is allowed as substantial an increase as he is lucky and/or clever enough to get hold of; and, even if this brings him into a higher tax bracket, the tax-man will never deprive him of *all* his additional money.

Alexander Cockburn

Philippi in Pennsylvania

The central point of the Pennsylvania primary is, of course, the most obvious one: Jimmy Carter achieved a victory as important to him as that first success in New Hampshire. He showed last Tuesday that he could win in a Northern industrial state, he disproved the notion that his remarks about 'ethnic purity' would significantly hurt him among black voters, he beat off – indeed trounced – the counter-attack of organised labour and won more votes from union members than anyone else. He has administered terminal humiliation to 'Scoop' Jackson and Mo Udall and has demonstrated that he can beat any other Democrat actively campaigning. In fact his victory is being compared to that of John Kennedy in West Virginia in 1960. There are many who now regard his nomination as the Democratic candidate in July as a virtual certainty, and who are already seriously assessing the sort of contrast that will emerge between him and President Ford in the autumn. Mrs Carter is already telling the popular press how she will redecorate the White House.

This is not to say that some sort of uneventful hiatus now looms before the mere formality of nomination. Paralleling the triumph of Carter in Pennsylvania has been the continued vigour of the 'uncommitted' movement – presently construed as fortifying the chances of Hubert Humphrey. In states where delegates are selected without the much-publicised operations of a primary, Carter has not been faring notably well. There will be many uncommitted candidates at the convention. The pressure on Humphrey – in the wake of his surrogate Jackson's rout – to declare himself an active candidate and even run in one of the final primaries is now immense. Opinion polls taken last Tuesday in Pennsylvania demonstrated that, had Humphrey been an active candidate there, the result would have been

very different. But if Humphrey has been prospering behind the relative immunity of his 'inactive' status he has also been creating a corresponding anticipatory backlash.

News that he has a 'pre-cancerous' condition was prominently displayed on the front page of the *Washington Post* a few days ago. Hostile gossip about the likelihood of the disastrous surfacing of political scandal is in plentiful supply. Liberals have not forgotten his Vietnam record, even if they applaud his present domestic policies. As an active candidate to run against President Ford he is reckoned as vulnerable.

Thus the Humphrey scenario presented over the last few months is looking less plausible. In this scenario it has always been conceded that if Carter arrives at the convention with between 1,000 and 1,100 delegate votes in his pocket he will win the nomination on the first ballot. With anything less it has been regarded as reasonable to assume that brokers gathered in back rooms will then turn to Humphrey. It is, however, entirely likely that animus among Carter supporters against the one man denying them easy triumph will prove inflexible. Carter might, to drive the point home, even threaten to bolt the party. In such a deadlock not Humphrey but a compromise candidate – even Teddy Kennedy – might emerge to unite the party in its hour of travail. Kennedy, it was noted in one national poll last week, is still more popular than either Carter or Humphrey among registered Democrats and independent voters. Humphrey, in sum, is no longer a compromise candidate – bridging the gap between Carter and Jackson. He is now in the front line himself, with all the risks that such a position entails.

But all such talk may be fatuous, even if it helps to fill in the time until July. The slide to Carter will now start to resemble an avalanche. Already many of those who

hung back till the Pennsylvania primary before declaring themselves for the Georgian evangelist are regretting their caution and hastening forward with assertions of admiration and support. Organised labour, hoping to have established a brokering role by forcing a Jackson victory in Pennsylvania, will now in the wake of conspicuous public humiliation seriously have to reconsider its relatively guarded attitude to Carter and whether to cut its losses. Those who were saying that Carter was vapid are now commending his prudence and political sagacity, those who have been proclaiming that he knew nothing and stood for nothing are now recounting his ability to 'learn quickly' and to plunge to the heart of each new problem.

Carter, in short, is rapidly ceasing to be a man and is on the way towards becoming a myth. Such is, after all, an important part of the American political process of selecting a president. Last Sunday James Reston, the senior American journalistic pundit, urged the elders of the Democratic Party to avert dissension and rally behind Carter. He ruminated thus:

He [Carter] is not a man of the past, or of the Right like Mr Ford, or of the Left like Mr Humphrey. He is at least something new and yet, paradoxically, something very old-fashioned in political, ethical, and even religious terms, and this seems to be touching something deep and enduring in the minds of many voters . . . He believes in something, in the American ideal we have lost.

This sort of rhetoric is much akin to a confirmation process. The American people are invested with imaginary feelings which are then matched up with an entirely imaginary candidate. (The end-result will, no doubt, be described by Theodore White in an entirely imaginary book.)

It would be tedious once again to rehearse the contradictions, velleities and lacunae in Carter's political record and present stated positions – even though, since this is the week in which the Senate report on the CIA has finally appeared, we might note that Carter's answer to the supervisory problems posed by that agency's crimes has been to announce that he as President would take full responsibility. So much for Watergate. Carter is a conservative Democrat who, with impressive artifice, has so far avoided being trapped on any issue. More relevant now is to consider the problems he poses for President Ford.

This Saturday Ford faces yet another round with Ronald Reagan in Texas. It would certainly be unwise to predict the outcome. But the magnetic pull to the Right that Ronald Reagan began to exert in New Hampshire has continued with unabated force. Ford has been spending his entire time in Texas thundering about the invincible military might and determination of the United States. The utterly absurd 'issue' of the continued US tenure of the Panama Canal has continued to consume much of his time – since Reagan has made America's grip on this increasingly unimportant strip of water a major plank in his platform. Ford is being inexorably pulled into the quasi-lunatic right-wing zone of Republican politics. The cherished middle ground has been abandoned, maintained only in the illusory sense that he is not as 'extreme' as Reagan.

Ford will certainly win the Republican nomination but what is the prospect he may well face in the election? He can look forward to the likelihood of a Democrat who is better positioned than anyone since Lyndon Johnson to sweep the whole of the South and who is now demonstrating strength in the industrial North East as well. Furthermore, this candidate is less open to traditional Republican attack. It will be hard for the President to attack Carter as a big-spending Democrat, hard indeed for him to get any sort of useful purchase on the fellow.

Charges that Carter is 'fuzzy on the issues' will be less potent in six months' time since by then Carter will not be positioning himself in relation to other Democrats but against eight years of Republican misrule and corruption. Ford thus is pinched between an ultra-conservative at present and

the likelihood of a moderate conservative in times to come. Slugging it out with Reagan, he is unable even to lay plans for the actual election and is reduced to trust in a continuing upswing in the economy to carry him through.

Such are the calculations that people are now making in order to pole-vault themselves without further effort over the tedium of existence until the election. There are, of course, reservations to be made, fingers of caution to be raised. One of the more endearing of these caveats was made by Jackson as he faced defeat last Tuesday. A victory for Carter in Pennsylvania, he said, 'could be the Governor's undoing because momentum without depth would be very thin and politically fragile'. Quite so, Senator, but it is still a lot better than no momentum at all.

New York

Mary Holland

Conor Cruise O'Brien and the Church

'Dad,' said the distinguished interviewee on Irish television, 'would have refused to sign a Bill legalising divorce when he was president. He would have resigned first.' Dad, in this case, was Eamonn De Valera, late President of the Republic, and towering influence in Irish politics for over half a century. It was De Valera who used to say that 'whenever I wanted to know what the Irish people wanted I had only to examine my own heart'.

The fact that 'Dad's' views on divorce were being examined at all on television is only one sign that a change of heart may be stirring in the Irish people which even the ghost of De Valera, let alone the Roman Catholic hierarchy, will be powerless to prevent. The whole gamut of laws on which the Church is accustomed to make its views most firmly felt are currently up for debate: divorce, contraception, adoption, custody of children, control of education.

Divorce, for example, is one issue on which the Government may soon be forced to take action, even though this will involve a change in the constitution which expressly forbids it. Ironically, this is because the Catholic Church in Ireland now takes a much more lenient view of the breakup of marriages. The number of ecclesiastical annulments has increased dramatically of late and this has meant that there is a growing number of Irish Catholics whose marriages have been declared void by the Church but who cannot get civil divorces, nor of course remarry. Similarly the law relating to contraception is riddled with anomalies as is the law on adoption and the custody of children.

But the challenges to the Church's authority on these issues have tended to emerge piecemeal, carried out as a series of guerrilla actions, often centred in Dublin or other large cities. As such they have not greatly alarmed the hierarchy, which has long been accustomed to random sniping and does not

see it as any great threat to its overall position in Irish society. When any such threat has loomed in the past, the bishops have stated their position with quiet confidence and have every reason to be well pleased with their success. The last such occasion was in 1974, when a government-backed Bill legalising the sale of contraceptives was brought before the Irish Parliament. At that time the bishops' position was made quite clear, as was the duty of the legislators to take into account the views of the majority of the Irish people whom they represented. The Bill was defeated, with the Irish Premier, Liam Cosgrave, leading the voting against it.

In the past few weeks, however, the central question of the Church's special hold on Irish life has been resuscitated as an issue in itself, which of course was why De Valera's son was being questioned about his dad's views on television. The present debate was sparked off by a courageous speech by (who else?) Conor Cruise O'Brien. Addressing a conference of humanists in Northern Ireland, he made an eloquent plea for rational public discussion on such issues as contraception and divorce. He also spoke of the difficulties of initiating this debate in Southern Ireland, and spoke of a sectarianism which was less violent than that which afflicted the North, but tended instead 'to be conducted not in a roar but in a sort of pervasive whisper, interspersed with pregnant silences and occasional carefully worded admonitions'.

There was nothing whispered about the Church's response to this, nor, according to its most prolific spokesman, Bishop Newman of Limerick, would there be anything whispered about its reaction in the future, should the need arise. The advocating of a secular state in Ireland was something the Church would fight to the end – 'We have got to give leadership to the people to stand up against a secular state and those who

represent it'. Just in case anyone was in any doubt as to whom Bishop Newman had in mind he went on to say that it was an insult to the Irish people that 'a minister of the Republic, a self-confessed agnostic' should make such a speech. So much for rational debate.

It would be encouraging to report that Dr O'Brien's close colleagues in the coalition government, known liberals like the Minister of External Affairs, Garret Fitzgerald, had rallied to his support. In fact the silence has been deafening. Depressing, but not altogether surprising. As Dr O'Brien once noted, in his book *States of Ireland*, 'the influence of the Church on the state should be measured not by the frequency or the intensity of confrontations, but by the assiduity with which politicians avoid such confrontations'.

There are other reasons why Dr O'Brien has failed to muster the support which he could reasonably have expected, from the liberal Left of the Irish community outside party politics. In the past few years he has alienated many of those who, it must have seemed when he first returned to Irish politics in the late 1960s, would represent his natural constituency. He has done this by including, in his single-minded attacks on the Provisional IRA, anyone who has seemed to him to give comfort to the Provos, for example by protesting at the increasing erosion of civil liberties contained in such legislation as the Offences Against the State Act. He has not spared academics, lawyers, trade unionists, politicians, many of whom have long been involved in campaigning on the kind of issues on which Dr O'Brien now calls for 'rational debate'. It is perhaps not surprising that such people haven't rushed to defend his stand on individual human rights, having so recently suffered the sharp edge of his tongue when they took a public stand on what seemed to them equally important libertarian issues.

Their silence, however, is to be regretted. Dr O'Brien's campaign needs a broader base if it is to engage the interest and support of a wider cross-section of Irish people. And Dr O'Brien, for all his fierce integrity and undoubted intellect, is not the man to do that. Some would say he is not the man to do it precisely because of these qualities. For all that he is given to boasts of topping the poll in his Dublin constituency, many Irish people feel extremely defensive about Conor Cruise O'Brien and his views. They resent his cleverness, his sophistication, the fact that he always seems to be attacking their most deeply felt emotions. Even when they agree that he is probably right, as in his attacks on the IRA, they do not particularly enjoy being told that the greatly revered myths of Irish nationalism are so much dangerous rubbish. The same is true of their religion. In many ways O'Brien sounds more like an English humanist, accusing them of being superstitious, narrow, in thrall to their priests, than one of themselves. Many Irish Catholics agree that the Church's dominance of Irish life, particularly in the sphere of personal relationships, should be challenged, but, given the choice of lining up with Conor Cruise O'Brien or their own parish priest, a lot of them feel more comfortable with their parish priest.

Alas, no one is ever going to claim for Conor Cruise O'Brien that if he wants to know what the Irish people want he should examine his own heart, though it may be at least as close to many of them as Eamon De Valera's. This is why the debate on secularising Irish society, which many

people feel to be the most important issue affecting both parts of Ireland, must be broadened. For a start Dr O'Brien is entitled to the public support of those political colleagues with whom he first discussed how to form a coalition government to advance 'a just society' in Ireland.

Jonathan Dimbleby

Beleaguered in Beirut

It seemed to be the centre of the world. On the way to the hotel at a road-block a child whose chin just reached the window poked his gun absent-mindedly towards my eyes and demanded my pass. 'Souhafi Britanni' (British journalist), I explained in anxious deference and he waved me on. It is the first lesson of the Lebanon: the gun rules, okay?

Most of the world's press have found urgent assignments elsewhere, driven out by random bullets and repetition. It is the same day after day, hideous, dangerous and beyond reason. Those who remain sit in the Commodore, nursing fear with alcohol, wondering what to say next. Outside mortars thud mindlessly on to innocent streets exploding chance human bodies to bits. Sirens

wail, machine guns chatter, and old hands explain in hope, not certainty, that 'it's outgoing'. Just after dinner there is a deafening explosion followed by the rat-tat-tat of automatic rifle fire. We collapse behind pillars and tables. The cashier, the bell-boy, the cook and the waiter grab guns and crouch in strategic crannies around the foyer. But it is a false alarm, a mere gang fight – and the manager, as unruffled as a tour guide in a traffic jam, motions us back to the bar, a drink on the house and our vigil.

The BBC World Service, a precious reminder at such moments that somewhere there is sanity, told us that our story was top of the news – but what was there to say that hadn't been said before a hundred times? There were many public statements: Sadat spoke, and Ghadaffi and Kissinger and Assad and Ford; but what they said was, as always, to be read between the lines. Chamoun uttered too, and Gemayel and Jumblatt, but their statements have the authority of a weathercock in a whirlwind. It was what they did not say that really mattered.

A 15-year-old boy disappeared last month in Beirut. A fortnight later his mother opened her front door one morning to find his clothes piled neatly in front of her on the street. Attached to them was her son's identity card, marked according to Lebanese law, with the word 'Muslim'. A few days later his mutilated corpse was found decomposing in a gutter. His name joins the statistics of mass confessional murder which corrupts the country. But that is an old horror. In the minds of those who like to think they control what is happening, the sectarian massacre which claims at least 30 lives each day is a reprehensible excrescence, a sideshow, not part of their grand design for the Lebanon. The war is not meant to be about religion. The Muslim gunman who cut the head off his dead enemy, thrust his hand into the Christian gullet and then held his arm aloft in a clenched salute exulted not in Allah but in bloody revolution. The wild-eyed young men with flowing hair who ride machine-gun on the Land Rovers which race through the ruined centre of Beirut, who rule the Hilton and the Holiday Inn, are the dispossessed who've discovered that power lies in the barrel of a gun.

The old Lebanon has crumbled. The hotels are gutted, the swimming pools filled with rubbish. The casinos and the clubs are barricaded, the brothels are burnt out –

Roger Woddiss

Family Tie

(After Lewis Carroll)

Mr Nicholson Fairbairn, Conservative MP, has suggested that delinquent children should be handcuffed to their parents.

Be tough with your unlikely lad
And bind him even tighter:
A handcuff fastened to his dad
Will teach the little blighter.

The brat's iniquities require
A punishment more fitting
Than burning in the parlour fire,
And less remote than hitting.

The bracelets on a wayward child
May bruise the little laddie,
But he will soon be reconciled
And learn to love his daddy.

And if that doesn't do the trick,
When truant Tim malingers,
Then you could brain him with a brick
Or crush his thieving fingers.

The law and order argument
Is one that time will settle
When fathers are less lenient
And Fairbairn shows his metal.

'Speak roughly to your little boy' –
The means may sound excessive:
Compared to those he would employ,
The Duchess was progressive.

Use our intelligence.



'and we had the best girls in the world' mourned my taxi-driver – and the cheap bars are looted. The last of the latter was shut a fortnight ago by the gunmen to protect the moral health of a city where dead bodies still lie stinking in the rubble.

It is true that the old Lebanon was rotten: an international counting house for the depraved, sustained by a fossilised political system which, as a matter of convenience, the West chose to honour as 'the only democracy in the Middle East'. Most of the rich have scurried to Europe but some from disbelief or shell-shock still sit in their apartments bemoaning the end of the old order: 'When we sat 30 at a table – you should have seen Beirut then', when the servants were cheap and not at war with you, and when the Muslims (a term used in this context to define the poor) were peaceful and behaved like human beings.

Those who are left of the bourgeoisie, which drew its cultural and social aspirations from Paris, which was once oh! so cool and chic, have dropped the mask. Only a mile from the front line, on both sides of the divide, matrons in curlers and house-coats lean on their balconies in silence with their unshaven husbands, day after day, running out of money, waiting for news from nowhere. At least the unlikely alliance of Maronite Christianity and crude capitalism has a cause.

The other day a senior CIA man defected in Greece. He told his story to the press – how the CIA had bungled the Cyprus affair and how his boss had helped start the war in the Lebanon. You may not have heard it, but that's what he said. Apparently, so his story went, so far from wanting peace in the Middle East, the United States, through the good offices of the CIA, had for long been urging the Right to take up arms – not against the Muslims or the Left, but against a far more serious enemy, the Palestinians. However, since Henry Kissinger had not seen fit to address himself to this allegation, it received that bottom-of-the-inside-page treatment which respectable papers reserve for false rumour and wild surmise. Yet it fits the facts and a theory which is half-believed by almost everyone in Beirut who still has the strength to speculate.

The PLO is not alone in believing that 'the war for the West Bank' is being fought in the Lebanon, that the Palestinian militias who have led the struggle against the Right are fighting for 'the survival of the Palestinian Revolution'. The theory goes roughly as follows: the United States still seeks to impose an 'American' solution in the Middle East – a solution which finds no place for the PLO. But the PLO, though not much loved by most Arab states, is recognised by them to be the official representative of the Palestinian people. It is increasingly evident, as well, that to the rest of the world Arafat is a more convincing leader than King Hussein. How then to discredit Arafat and weaken the PLO? Simple: destroy the PLO's last political and military stronghold in the Middle East, the leadership is killed or scattered abroad and the Palestinian refugees will return to the 'moderate' embrace of Jordan and the United States.

It should have been easy. The Phalangists had always resented the assertive independence of the Palestinian commandos within the Lebanon. They envied the ease with which King Hussein put his Palestinians to flight in September 1970, and they have long wished that the Lebanese Army would show the same ruthlessness and rid their land of these turbulent Arabs bent on war with Israel. There would be no difficulty, so the theory goes, in persuading the Phalangists to take the contract for the Palestinians. And, so the theory also goes, they did.

But then, of course, the plan went wrong. The Left, goaded beyond endurance for years, found common cause with the Palestinians; the Army collapsed; the Right was stubborn but not strong; the poor rose against the rich; Christian fell on Muslim and Muslim on Christian; and soon the conflict knew no bounds. Before long it was

out of control. So, far from crushing the PLO, the war all but consumed the Middle East, as the Lebanon spiralled down into the vortex, driven mad by communal passions that cool brains could never comprehend. After the first year, there were 17,000 dead. And after the second? That too is speculation.

In the Commadore the telex chatters the facts across the world: so many died yesterday, so many today, so many tomorrow: so-and-so said such-and-such and there's hope of peace but no cause for optimism. This is the 28th truce and they're still fighting in the streets; the peace of the Middle East, the peace of the world, is still at stake.

Back in London the news is about Princess Anne and the Prime Minister. The former was injured; the latter had escaped 'disaster' and was on the way back to 'sanity'. And on an inside page I read that another 200 died in Beirut.

Corinna Adam

Mr Stonehouse Viewed from Above

Mr John Stonehouse is perhaps best seen from the gallery – whether it be that of the House of Commons, the Cambridge Union, or the Old Bailey. The gallery appreciates him, enjoys his talents. The House of Commons may have lately chosen to ignore them; seats in the Chamber itself may be empty, apart from the presence of the Speaker and the humorous Mr Norman St John-Stevan, but we *voyeurs* are there, upstairs. In Cambridge this week, there was no need to 'paper the house' with invited guests of the star performer: the Union overflowed, even enormities like sitting on the floor near the front benches being permitted. And whatever the state of the press benches at the Old Bailey, the gallery there too is packed with us dutiful sensation-seekers, who have queued for an hour in a cold wind merely to catch a glimpse of him – and of course of his Nefertiti-like secretary Sheila Buckley.

The media, said Mr Stonehouse in Cambridge the day before he went on trial on 21 counts of various forgeries and frauds, are corrupt. They are guided by what is sensational and trivial. The popular press has no interest in purveying accurate information; and this has a great deal to do with the Decay of Britain (the coda to his speeches which we

fans have learnt to wait for in happy apprehension). Certainly, wherever it may be gleaned, the misinformation is there. I was kindly provided with a great deal of it by fellow members of the Old Bailey gallery, especially by one lady who informed us that (a) it was forbidden to pay for a 'decent' education any more; (b) that it was against the law to pay for private medical treatment; and (c) that 'it is only in the law that money talks . . . you can get away with anything'. We all had our views on the iniquity of legal fees – but the fact is, in this particular case, Mr Stonehouse's barristers were originally being paid for out of legal aid. 'That may be so,' said one of the audience, 'but when I was in India this would never have been allowed to happen . . . What, one wondered? But too late, because the queue had begun to shuffle along the stone stairs and chill passages which, more than anything, show one what the 'authorities' think of us, the public. (Only a door away, there is fitted carpeting and central heating for anyone with a press card or a wig and gown.) 'They don't like us here,' said one of the public gallery-goers. 'You can tell the importance of the case by the number of the people. The number of the people they don't let in, that is.' On Tuesday, at least a dozen seats in the public gallery of Court One were deliberately kept free. Parties of Swedish tourists had to indulge their interest in the majesty of justice elsewhere. So did law students, people with a special interest in civil liberties – anyone, in fact, in civvies who had not arrived an hour before the court opened.

Below us, Mr Stonehouse took notes on the various 'run-of-the-mill' applications for bail which came up before his own case – not my phrase, but that of one of the 'authorities'. When his turn came, we gallery watchers saw a different manner from that he uses in the Commons or the Cambridge

This America

□ Plainclothes police in Los Angeles infiltrated what they called a 'slave market' on Saturday night, bought a man for about £8 and then made 40 arrests. They brought charges under an old slavery statute, saying the auction was run by sado-masochistic homosexuals.

Leaders of the local homosexual community reacted angrily. They said the event was merely a fund-raising affair for a VD clinic. – *Daily Telegraph* (Bridget Stevens)

Union. There, he has often aimed for the quick laugh (at Cambridge, for instance), congratulating his young audience on 'not yet being corrupted by the outside world'. Or perhaps he didn't intend that to be funny. In any case, it was received as such). At the Old Bailey on Tuesday, Mr Stonehouse wanted to make what was in effect a political declaration, and define himself as a 'political' case.

Since these are the cases the NS tends to take most interest in, there was a certain terrible sense of *déjà vu* about its inevitable failure – inevitable, that is to say, in the legal sense: there is no doubt at all that Mr Stonehouse intends to continue to treat his case as a political one. After all, he has said quite openly that he dismissed his own counsel because he had 'information' that the Crown case was politically motivated.

This remark appeared to irritate Mr Justice Eveleigh considerably – much more than the request for an adjournment, which looked like a formality on both sides – and irritated him more than we had expected, on the upstairs benches. This was, after all, only the first day: and one is used to judges going out of their way to be patient with defendants who have chosen to conduct their own cases, allowing them – at least to begin with – enormous leeway. But Mr Stonehouse was told several times to 'sit down or be taken down' – i.e. back to the cells – even before he had been arraigned. Mr Justice Eveleigh did say, though, that he was thinking about letting Mr Stonehouse have a table in the dock, on which to arrange his papers, and as many useful Old Bailey folders as he needed, to keep his papers tidy.

Monday's debate at Cambridge was perhaps the out-of-town trial run for the London opening. During the real performance, the gallery cannot escape the *longueurs* of legal argument which we may hear, but no one on the press benches can report (or, indeed, with some notable exceptions, bothers to listen to). So, apart from the occasional abbreviated speeches by Mr Stonehouse, the gallery had a dullish day until suddenly, at 4 p.m., the jury was sworn in. The defence challenged nine jurors, woman mostly 'of a certain age' – and very irritated some of them were about it afterwards in the Ladies', as if doubt had been cast on their integrity. It is an odd system – who shall be chosen, and who cast aside?

The Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Robert Mark, has often been notably unenthusiastic about the role of juries – their ignorance, their tendency to let obviously guilty people off. But what can anyone expect, when we know nothing – more importantly, the defendants know nothing – about them that cannot be discerned by a brief glance in court? Only their sex, their age (roughly), their class (again, roughly): challenges have to be made before the potential juror's voice is heard when he or she takes the oath.

And why, as a matter of public interest, are jurors so alarmed, by continual warnings not to discuss the case *in progress*, that they refuse to do so even *after* the trial? We in the gallery may represent the public. We seem to change parts, not always for the better, when we are down there in the court. No longer audience, but actors.

Peter Paterson

A Flag Day for the Third World

UNCTAD-4 opens in Nairobi next week, and most people in Britain would be hard put to it to decide whether it is a new space rocket or some African preliminary to the Olympic Games. There is probably no developed industrial country in the world where there has been less public discussion, less political debate and less understanding of the issues at stake at this fourth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. But don't care, as the nursery adage has it, was made to care: the claims of the Third World are urgent and pressing and they will increasingly be heard.

Nairobi represents a negotiation between the desperate poor of the earth and the rich nations, aimed at the creation of a fairer trading system for the world. If it fails, the alternative, in the words of Gamani Corea, UNCTAD's secretary-general, will be a world of increasing tension, confrontation and turmoil.

The agenda for Nairobi has, in effect, been written by the poor nations. Some of their demands may seem dangerously naïve in the sophisticated context of British politics. Some will be regarded as an impossible try-on, whose adoption would further worsen our economic plight. The analogy that must, however, constantly be borne in mind is of a negotiation, with the poor nations as the workers and the rich as the bosses. And, as with any industrial bargaining session, the workers' demands are invariably dismissed at the outset as utopian, bankruptcy-inducing and impossible to concede. Yet, in the end, they are conceded, and the economic adjustments, however painful to the shareholders, are made. Nairobi will consist of the preliminary skirmishing. The British Government delegation, along with the other industrialised countries, has a duty to bargain responsibly.

The poor countries, demonstrating in the so-called Group of 77 more solidarity than they have ever shown before, have laid down a number of objectives. They want the developed countries to stop renegeing on the aid targets they have set themselves – one suggestion is that governments in advanced countries should levy a 'development income tax' on their citizens, which would at least have the merit of involving us all in a closer consideration of the issues. They want the patent laws modified so that a transfer of technology from the developed to the developing nations can take place, and they want us to stop poaching their trained technical personnel.

Many of the problems of the Third World spring from post-colonial 'monocrop' economies. Nearly 90 per cent of the exports of Mauritius, for example, consists of sugar; over half of Sri Lanka's of tea; copper accounts for 95 per cent of Zambia's exports, and bananas represent around half of the total earnings of countries like Panama, Ecuador and Honduras. Dependency extends from products to markets.

Over 70 per cent of Third World exports goes to the 'industrialised North' – Western Europe, Japan, Australasia and North America (another 8 per cent goes to Communist countries, which are also required by the Group of 77 to mend their ways, in particular by switching away from long-term barter deals). One of the arguments at Nairobi will be for the poor countries to be given a bigger hand in the processing, transport, marketing and distribution of their products, which will mean loosening the iron grip of the great multinational corporations and shipping lines.

But, in the sense of the here-and-now practicalities, the important debates at Nairobi will concern the establishment of a fair trade structure, including compensation for the poor countries for the devastating effects of Western inflation on their economies. The UNCTAD secretariat is proposing its own 'integrated plan', with such elements as the creation of buffer stocks of key commodities like copper, bauxite, tea, coffee, jute, and cotton – which can be released in times of shortage and held back in times of surplus to stabilise prices to the producer-countries. The cost would be up to £5,000m., to be shared by producers and consumers, though it will be argued that the poorest countries should not have to contribute.

UNCTAD is also proposing a scheme of indexation, based on a 'shopping basket' of 89 manufactured products made in the West and commonly exported to the Third World, and 16 primary commodities exported by the poor countries. If inflation pushes up the cost of the manufactured products, then the price of the commodities would automatically rise by the same amount. And, however much it hurts, the developed countries will be urged to liberalise trade and encourage the diversification of the economies of the Third World by a fairer system of tariffs. While basic unprocessed products are often admitted free, the more 'manufactured' they are, the more they are liable for import duty: thus jute comes into Britain free of duty, but jute fabrics have to pay a 20-per-cent duty.

If the poor countries could increase their manufactured exports by only 15 per cent, another eight million jobs would be created by 1980, thus absorbing about half the estimated increase in the labour force of the Third World. The cost to the West would be something like a million jobs – certainly a problem, but hardly an insuperable one if the potential advantage of increased purchasing power of the Third World is taken into account.

Because of the absence of debate in this country, the nuts and bolts of UNCTAD-4 are bound to seem not only remote but excessively complicated. Aid, when it is thought about at all, gets a kind of flag-day response, or is seen as a way of bumping up exports (the Ministry of Overseas Develop-

ment boasted last year that 'British industry received £10,354,000 in July from orders following loans made to developing countries by the MoD'). The recipients, nevertheless, are still regarded as feckless and irresponsible, no doubt having brought their misfortunes on their own heads. Public reaction in Britain to the demand by the Group of 77 that all existing Third World debts to the advanced nations should be cancelled, that there should no longer be any conditions attached to International Monetary Fund loans and that all aid in future should be in the form of grants is depressingly predictable.

But such reactions cannot be made the excuse for refusing to change the economic and financial rules which are weighted so heavily in our favour. There are, indeed, signs that the Third World wants to help itself. A new unity is being built around Opec, largely because the Arab oil-producers provided the supreme inspiration for primary producers to extract a better deal from the West. No other product lends itself so dramatically to the exercise of muscle power as oil (coffee is the second largest commodity in international trade) but there has been a big increase in the formation of producer associations which, in time, will exert pressure on the consuming nations. For this unity to develop, how-

ever, the Arabs will have to compensate the poor countries hard hit by their success in raising the price of oil, thus recognising and acknowledging the reckless loyalty they have received from the Third World.

What is worrying about Nairobi, and the continuing North-South dialogue at meetings like the long-running conference on world economic cooperation in Paris, is that the British participants, unlike the representatives of any other Western industrial country, are untouched and unguided by an informed public opinion at home. The politics of world development are virtually ignored by the press and TV in Britain. There may be a flurry of activity as UNCTAD opens; but the issues will be discussed in terms of the private briefings given by British ministers and civil servants. In Holland, Sweden, Denmark and Canada there is a great deal of public discussion of the plight of the poor countries, the steps that the West should take and the impact such steps will have on employment at home. The representatives of these governments are answerable to public opinion in a way Mr Reg Prentice and his colleagues are not. It is ironic, and in many ways tragic, that the largest of the former colonial powers should display the least interest in the evolution of the post-colonial world.

Jeremy Bugler

Too Much Atomic Secrecy

What makes an issue run? A few years ago Friends of the Earth, the polymath environmentalists, dumped dirty bottles on the pristine doorstep of Schweppes's head office in Connaught Place, London. The Friends then basked for months in multi-media publicity about non-returnables, hardly an issue upon which man's destiny can be said to pivot.

Last Saturday the Friends organised a high-grade public debate outside the security fence of Windscale, the largest concentration of nuclear installations in Europe. They invited local people and nuclear workers and hired a train to bring 800 people from around the country to listen to speakers debate the issue of nuclear power and its safety. While ITN commendably put a crew on the train and covered the story, the BBC didn't mention it at all on the main news, and only one Sunday 'heavy' covered it. And the nuclear issue is, surely, one of a handful of the most critical concerns we face.

In Britain, for some reason, nuclear power has been discussed more in a low-toned mumble than in open, popular debate, though Tony Benn has tried. It has not generated the sort of wide public interest that it has in France, Japan, the US or Germany. Possibly CND exhausted many people's capacities for nuclear protesting in Britain. Probably yet more people shun the issue because they feel inadequate in the face of nuclear power's complex technology. Certainly, the strategy of the civil nuclear

industry has been to keep its head down, to progress by stealth, and not to get people losing their sleep over plutonium-239.

The Friends have now set themselves the task of making the nuclear debate a mass issue, and significantly it was a 39-year-old Canadian physicist, Dr Walter Patterson, one of Saturday's speakers, who started it off. Patterson, author of a new and commendably clear Pelican *Nuclear Power*, cannot understand why people are prepared to discuss the social implications of, say, colour TV, but balk at the implications of nuclear power, when the technologies involved are of roughly similar complexity.

British Nuclear Fuels were unhappy that the Friends sited their debate outside Windscale, but it was a doubly appropriate location. For one thing, there stand the No 1 reactor and its twin, both stuffed with concrete, after the most serious leakage of radioactive material into the atmosphere that people know about. For another thing, Windscale is to be the site of the new plant to reprocess nuclear waste from foreign countries, Japan especially. This programme is potentially the most hazardous exercise, undertaken for purely commercial ends, that this country will ever have embarked upon. The object of reprocessing spent fuel from nuclear power stations is to recover plutonium and uranium which remain behind in the nuclear fuel elements. Both are theoretically valuable nuclear fuels. Once reprocessed, the fuels are returned to the

nations from whence they came. And here, according to an increasing number of nuclear scientists, there's a special danger which Britain is actively promoting.

To give an example, one scientist who has just declared his concern about the safety aspects of fuel reprocessing is Dr Victor Gilinsky of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Last month he addressed a conference of the US Atomic Industrial Forum in Florida, saying that fuel reprocessing, which gives people direct access to separated plutonium, 'collapses the lead-time to produce nuclear war-heads and makes early detection by traditional methods impossible'. 'It is now clear at what is perhaps the eleventh hour,' he went on, 'that the spread may frustrate international efforts to create sound institutions and effective instruments to protect against possible mis-use of civilian plutonium stocks.' He wanted a moratorium on fuel reprocessing until international controls had been worked out.

The trouble with separated plutonium is simply that it makes good atom bombs. The truth seems to be that reprocessing greatly increases the spread of nuclear weapons, either directly through passing about these parcels of plutonium, or indirectly by increasing the pressure for national reprocessing plants. MPs who have debated the issue of whether to spend £900m. on building the reprocessing plant have generally exhibited an amazing ability to concentrate on the relatively minor issues to the exclusion of the major. The economic benefits that reprocessing may bring Britain has obsessed them. 'This huge capital investment will bring considerable benefits to the whole of the North West Region of England and particularly to the construction industry, which badly needs it,' said John Evans, Labour Member for Newton, in a debate last December. Dr John Cunningham, PPS to the Prime Minister and Labour MP for the constituency in which Windscale lies, has exhibited a technocratic zeal and a belief in the beneficence of nuclear power in which he is only exceeded by Patrick Jenkin, former Opposition spokesman on energy. Cunningham, for example, has argued that reprocessing is an 'established technology'. This is bilge. Nowhere in the world is there a plant operating for the commercial reprocessing of oxide fuel.

It seems quite possible that British Nuclear Fuel's new enterprise will prove as commercially disastrous as it is environmentally dangerous. Then why on earth did Tony Benn approve it? The answer may be that he's had the wool pulled over his eyes, just as efficiently as he claims happened in the late 1960s, when he approved the deal between Rio Tinto-Zinc and UKAEA for the supply of uranium from Namibia. Benn's advisers in the Department of Energy have a stiff pro-nuclear slant. The chief scientist at the department, for example, is Dr Walter Marshall, a clever scientist-politician who is at the self-same time deputy chairman of the UKAEA. What the nuclear debate in Britain needs now, surely, is an end to biased advice, clashes of interests, MPs who put constituency before country, and also a minister who will take on the nuclear bureaucracy in his own department. All that, please, and open debate.

Gas

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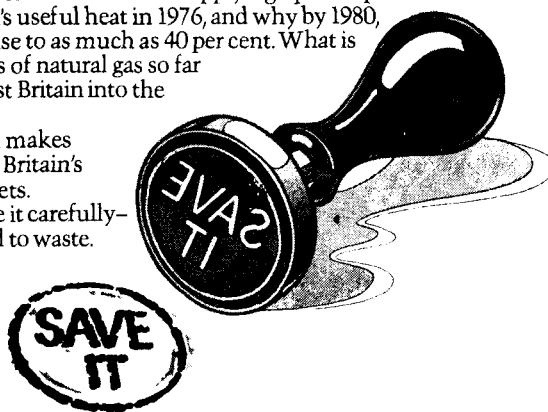
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- 2 Turn your thermostat down a degree or two
- 3 Turn off unnecessary radiators
- 4 Insulate your roof space and hot water system
- 5 Have your gas equipment properly maintained and serviced
- 6 Ask at your local showroom for further information about how to save gas—and save money

BRITISH GAS



Charles Colson*

A Night Out for the President

One night in early October 1971 I was working late with George Shultz, director of the Office of Management and Budget, preparing for delicate negotiations with union leaders over wages and price-control policies. By 9 p.m. we had papers strewn all over Shultz's office.

We had just finished watching the President's television address to the nation on the economy, and I was expecting his call.

A few minutes after nine the phone rang. 'Well, what did you think of it, Chuck?' he asked. 'How did you like the point I made about public cooperation? Remember, that's what you were so concerned about.' We rambled on.

About four minutes into the conversation, however, he asked: 'Where is Eugene Ormandy tonight?'

'I don't know,' I answered, wondering what the conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra had to do with a speech on economics.

The President explained that Julie had been to the Kennedy Centre a few days earlier for an Ormandy performance which she had highly recommended. 'Find out if Ormandy is still at the Centre. I might want to go tonight,' he said.

Simple enough, I thought. But through the White House operators I discovered that staff members who usually handled such details had left for the day. Shultz's secretary, Barbara Otis, began thumbing through newspapers. There were performances listed for the two other theatres in the Kennedy Centre – the Opera House and the Eisenhower Theatre – but none for the Concert Hall nor any mention of Eugene Ormandy.

I was becoming a trifle concerned; four or five minutes had passed, and the President would be getting restless. Recognising my distress, Shultz had abandoned the complex papers that were spread out on his desk. All three of us, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, his secretary, and the President's special counsel, were flipping through newspapers and weekly entertainment magazines.

White House operators, who had never failed us in reaching anyone, anywhere, anytime, were now frantically trying every conceivable number at the Kennedy Centre: backstage phones, the manager's office, emergency numbers – all to no avail.

Six minutes had elapsed since the President's call. As I feared, he called again. He was very pleasant. 'Just wondered if you have found out what is at the Kennedy Centre?'

'Not yet, sir. We're still searching.'

He made a muttering noise, cleared his throat, and suggested I call him back when I had the information.

I was getting nowhere in Shultz's office and decided to return to my own. My resourceful secretary, Joan Hall, would surely be able to handle this.

Joan came up with a reasonable idea. She

called Eugene Ormandy at his home in Philadelphia.

'Mr Ormandy, this is the White House calling.'

'Really.'

'Yes, the President is trying to find out if you are at the Kennedy Centre tonight.'

Long pause. 'No. I am here at home reading a book.'

'Oh. Well, thank you. Sorry to have disturbed you.'

Joan hung up a bit sheepishly. I have often wondered what thoughts went through Mr Ormandy's mind that evening about the President, and how well we were managing the nation's affairs.

Previously, in handling special tasks for the President, I had remained cool. And never before had I been given such a simple request. But in those few moments after his second call – it was now about 9.25 p.m. – I began to panic. Ormandy wasn't at the Kennedy Centre, but what if the President liked what was there? I had never had anything to do with arranging his travel.

Meanwhile Joan continued making calls to the social office, the newspapers, the military aide's office, and elsewhere, trying to find out what was playing at the Concert Hall. Harried, frustrated, I decided to send a message to the President through his valet, Manolo Sanchez.

'Manolo, this is Mr Colson.'

'Yes, sir. Do you want to speak to the President?'

'No, no. Has he . . . er . . . retired for the night?'

'No, Mr Colson. He is walking around the Lincoln Room. He seems restless, sir.'

'Manolo, please take him a note. Tell him that Mr Ormandy – yes, O-r-m-a-n-d-y – is not playing at the Kennedy Centre.'

I hoped that the note from Manolo would satisfy the President. After all, it was now 9.30 p.m., really too late to go anywhere. Maybe – I hoped he would just decide to read a good book. But no.

At 9.35 p.m. the President called again. 'Well, Chuck, you found out that Ormandy wasn't at the Kennedy Centre, eh?'

'Yes, sir.'

'That's very good, Chuck, very good,' he replied. There was a short pause. 'Do you suppose, Chuck, you might find out what is playing there?'

I explained that none of the papers had been of any help.

'Have you thought about calling the Kennedy Centre, or should I?' the President asked, deliberately measuring each word.

I told him that I had tried that, but the phones didn't answer, that I would keep trying and call him back.

**Charles Colson was special counsel to President Nixon from 1969 to 1973. This article is extracted from his forthcoming book Born Again, to be published by Hodder and Stoughton in the autumn at £4.95.*

He said: 'That is very good. You do that,' and hung up.

By now my tie was down and I was perspiring. My assistant, Dick Howard, was also in the office calling friends, seeking their help.

Then Joan signalled me. She had on the phone the head waitress from the Kennedy Centre restaurant, La Grande Scène. The young lady, Raquel Ramirez, was Spanish and did not speak English very well. Would I talk with her? Yes, I sure would.

'Miss Ramirez, my name is Charles Colson . . . Colson . . . C-o-l-s-o-n. Yes, I am a special counsel to the President – the President of the United States, that is . . . Yes, that's right. . . . Mr Nixon.'

I loosened my tie further.

'Now, Miss Ramirez, the President would like to go to the Concert Hall tonight. But we cannot seem to discover what is playing there. Would you be kind enough to walk over to the Concert Hall and find out what is going on?'

This is utterly ridiculous, I thought. She will think I'm a nut, that this is a practical joke.

'The President wants me to go over to the Concert Hall?' a small voice asked incredulously.

Carefully I went through it again. 'I'll wait on the line until you come back,' I said desperately.

La Grande Scène is on the fourth floor of the mammoth building at the far south end. Fortunately – the only break so far in the evening – the Concert Hall is also on the south end. It is a good ten-minute walk from one end of the centre to the other.

For some reason that waitress believed me. I waited for what seemed like an eternity. Within a few minutes, she was back, explaining that the hall seemed to be filled with military officers in dress uniforms, and a military band was playing. I asked her for one other small favour: to go backstage, find someone who looked like he might be in authority, and tell him that the President might be coming and to make necessary arrangements.

With this clue, Joan reached the duty officer at the Pentagon and learned that this was a formal black-tie affair for senior officers, plus a performance by the four military bands. With a sigh of relief I called the President at 9.53 p.m. to tell him it was a military concert, private, by invitation only.

'These are the same bands you hear at the White House, sir. I don't think you are missing anything. These bands will come and play for you any time you like.'

'Marvellous,' he replied. 'That is just what I feel like hearing tonight, but I'm not dressed. If it's black tie, I'll have to change.'

'Do you really want to go to all that trouble – I mean, you must be tired,' I suggested meekly. I should have known better. That was the surest way to guarantee that he would go.

'Have the car at the south entrance in five minutes, Chuck.'

I sat for a long instant frozen in horror. How did I start this process by which the President could have a night on the town? There were Secret Service men to notify, and there was the problem of carrying that vital little black briefcase housing the

nuclear-alert device. Doctors, the press, radio hookups – for the President to walk across the street involved assembling a small army.

Fortunately, my assistant had been an advance man for a year-and-a-half. He called W.16, the Secret Service control office in the White House basement. He would take care of getting the President to the Kennedy Centre. Dick told me as he pushed me out of the door: 'You get down to the Concert Hall and let someone know that the President is coming.'

Dashing out of the door, I jumped into a White House limousine Joan had called. 'Come on, step on it. The President is right behind us,' I shouted to the driver, forgetting to give him directions. The driver looked startled, then suspicious. Finally, when I told him our destination, we shot out of the driveway.

As we sped down Virginia Avenue toward the Kennedy Centre at seventy miles an hour, I could listen on the two-way radio to the frantic calls from W.16 summoning agents back to the White House, calling for the President's car and an accompanying Secret Service car. All but two agents had retired for the night, I later learned.

Suddenly a horrible thought occurred to me. What if the Concert Hall performance was already over?

My stomach began to tighten as I imagined the President arriving at the Kennedy Centre only to find the crowd pouring out. We had been unable, except through the waitress at La Grande Scène, to let anyone know that

the President even might be on his way. Would they believe her? As I thought about it, I became even more mortified. Why should they believe her? I certainly wouldn't have.

When we arrived at the south entrance to the Kennedy Centre, I was relieved to see one of the President's own Secret Service agents there with a radio plug in his ear. The professionals had taken over. Backstage were a collection of stagehands, a tall and very distinguished man standing in the shadows, and the conductor of the Marine Band. Cheerily I gave him the news: 'The President is on his way to listen to your concert.'

He turned pale. 'It's too late. Tell him not to come. All four service bands are now playing together on the stage. It is a final medley. In six minutes the programme will be over.'

'The President will be here any moment. You'll have to play something. Play the medley over again,' I said firmly.

Marines follow orders. The conductor took a full breath, stared at me for an instant, then turned and marched on to the stage. He began whispering into the ear of the Army conductor.

The Marine nodded his head up and down vehemently.

The Army musician shook his head stonily from side to side.

More whispers. The same thing all over again. One head bobbing up and down – the other shaking side to side.

Good God, I thought, this whole per-

formance will wind up in a war between the Army and the Marines.

Suddenly there was another flurry of whispering. Then the Army conductor began nodding his head up and down. I sighed in relief.

As the pantomime was going on, I peered into the hall full of women in evening gowns and men in dark-blue dress uniforms trimmed with gold braid. I began to wonder what they would think when they heard the medley that was now being played repeated note for note.

The Marine conductor returned backstage with his colleagues from the Navy and Air Force, working out additional numbers that would extend the programme another half hour. It was then I recognised the tall, distinguished man nearby. He was William McCormick Blair Jr, director of the Kennedy Centre, former Ambassador to Denmark, and a prominent Washington socialite. He, along with much of the Washington establishment, viewed us Nixon men as uncultured intruders at his Centre.

I introduced myself to Blair, who dilated his nostrils and said: 'This is highly irregular, you know.'

I explained that the President had a regular box at the Kennedy Centre, and had the prerogative to use it at any time. In the future, I promised, some better communications would be arranged in the event the President again had a last-minute desire to attend a performance.

I have had a very clear understanding with the White House that the President will

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always give us 24 hours' notice before he attends,' he said testily.

I decided I didn't have time to stand there arguing. I was also afraid that if he made one more complaint, I might punch him on the nose. Expecting the President at any moment, I sped back down the passageway to the double doors which led back into the main lobby. I was running and there was no point in slowing down. So I hit the two release handles at full speed.

Pow! The doors exploded open. Barely a foot away was a startled President and an agitated Secret Service man who had started for his gun. I had nearly knocked the President down!

'Well . . . Chuck!'

I noticed that the President was wearing a red smoking jacket with black lapels. I started to tell him he had forgotten to change, but quickly thought better of it. 'Everything is in order,' I said breathlessly. 'You can go directly to your box.'

'Where is the box?' the Secret Service agent asked.

'I'll lead the way,' I said nonchalantly, not knowing the location but hoping that I could bluff it through.

Halfway down the long passageway leading to the back of the hall, the President turned and said: 'Have you made arrangements for them to play the you-know-what, Chuck?' He didn't want to come right out and say it, but I knew he meant *Hail to the Chief*.

According to protocol it had to be played when he entered the hall. Once more I sped backstage to find my new friend, the Marine conductor, grateful that the Secret Service agent would now have to find the entrance to the President's box.

The Marine band leader did not seem happy to see me. 'Watch for the President. When he appears in his box, have the band play *Hail to the Chief*,' I told him.

The conductor looked startled. 'The four bands are still on stage. They have never played *Hail to the Chief* together, and I don't see how they could do it without rehearsing.'

I must have looked on the verge of apoplexy because he raised his hand. 'Wait a moment.' Another consultation. More pantomime. Then he was back. 'We'll have the Marine Band play it alone,' he said.

Back down the long hallway I loped until I found the President's box. To my relief, the Secret Service agent was guarding the door. The President was standing alone in the small anteroom which is between the open entrance hall of the mezzanine and his box. The scene is forever engraved in my consciousness. The President was staring at the wall, his arms hanging limply by his side in the most dejected posture I have ever witnessed. I imagined that he was either counting to ten or else repeating over and over to himself. 'Colson must go . . . Colson must go . . .'

I went into the box, brought out General Haig, who was using it that evening, opened the door wide so the Marine conductor would get the signal, and ushered the President in. The Marine Band then struck up *Hail to the Chief*, and the President began waving to the cheering crowd.

Slowly I returned to my waiting limousine. My legs were weak. In the car I advised

the Secret Service command post by radio that the President was in his box and they should do whatever they normally do to take the President home after the performance.

At home, halfway through the second Scotch, it did occur to me that I should let someone other than the Secret Service know that the President was at the Kennedy Centre. I called Ron Ziegler, the press secretary, and gave him the news.

'The President couldn't be there,' he said stiffly, 'otherwise I would have been notified.'

The next day H. R. Haldeman summoned me to his office and dressed me down for breaking every rule in the book. 'You know,

Chuck, this isn't funny. You could have put the President's life in jeopardy. The Secret Service wasn't prepared. It was a thoroughly stupid thing for you to do.'

I agreed it certainly had been stupid, but I asked what I should do if it ever happened in the future.

'Just tell him he can't go, that's all. He rattles his cage all the time. You can't let him out.' While I pondered this startling thought, the usually stern Haldeman softened. 'The President enjoyed himself and it came out well. I guess that's what counts.'

The next time the President called me, to my relief it had to do with the war in Vietnam, inflation, and negotiations with Russia.

Bel Mooney

The Do-It-Yourself Prison

'It's ironic really – that I've had to lose my life in order to find it, and to realise I never had a life at any time.' Those words – a comment on the uselessness of the past, the paradox of the present, the hopelessness of the future – were spoken a few weeks ago by a man serving life imprisonment for murder in Scotland. Brought up in the Gorbals, drawn relentlessly into a life of crime and vicious violence, he had 15 previous convictions before the life sentence, and since 1967 has been convicted four times for assaulting prison officers. James Boyle used to be 'billed' as the hardest gangster in Scotland; certainly he was hated and feared by prison staff – giving and receiving violence, behaving (as he says) 'like an animal'. Exactly two years ago he was taken from the worst possible conditions in Scottish prisons, the 'cage' at Inverness where he had been held naked in solitary confinement, to the new, experimental Special Unit at Barlinnie Prison, Glasgow. Since then he has altered beyond recognition. His sculptures have been exhibited all over Scotland, and he believes that the methods used in the unit are the only way to combat the brutalising effect – on officers as well as inmates – of the traditional penal system.

The achievement of the Special Unit, which is completely self-contained and autonomously run by its five prisoners and 15 officers, is extraordinary – though two years is a short time to judge. But while it should be seen as an unusually brave experiment by the Scottish Home and Health Department, and an intelligent approach to the treatment of long-term prisoners with especially violent records, its existence raises other questions. As Roy Jenkins once commented: 'There has to be a substantial popular interest and support for the aims of an enlightened penal policy and the methods used to carry it out.' Today Scotland's Special Unit finds its progress seriously hampered by the lack of just such interest and support.

The experiment must be seen against the background of crime in Scotland, which has a greater proportion of its population in prison than any other European country –

about 5,000 at any one time. As crimes of violence within the community have increased since the war, so has serious violence inside prison – culminating in a series of incidents around 1970. The Scottish Prison Officers' Association, worried (once the death penalty was abolished) about the vulnerability of its members in dealing with 'lifers' who had nothing to lose, asked that something should be done. So a working party was set up by the Scottish Home and Health Department to study prison violence and methods of containment, which finally came up with the idea of the Special Unit. It would be staffed by specially trained volunteers, and 'the traditional officer-inmate relationship should be modified to approximate more closely to a therapist-patient basis for retaining a firm but fair discipline system'. Five prisoners who had been at the centre of disturbances elsewhere were transferred to the unit. Since then there have been no grave incidents of violence in any Scottish prison.

The atmosphere in the unit is relaxed. At the beginning the men decided to leave the door of the punishment cell off its hinges – and it has never been needed for its original purpose. They cook their own food, arrange their own recreation, and make their own decisions at a weekly communal meeting of staff and inmates. If it is generally felt that a certain prisoner (or officer for that matter) is causing problems within the community, then he cannot escape 'the hot seat'. Decisions on new inmates are taken communally, and since the domestic running of the unit has been left largely to the discretion of those within it, visiting is not restricted, nor are letters censored. Most important, staff and inmates share the overwhelming conviction that the success of the Special Unit is more important than the needs, or neuroses, of any individual within it. As one man put it: 'The unit is our ultimate responsibility. We have to prove that to treat people like human beings for the first time in their lives means they will respond like human beings.'

The switch from a traditional prison setting to the unit's liberal regime, however, is not without difficulties. The prisoners ex-

plain that to have to account for yourself, and to consider others, makes demands far more rigorous than coping with the privations of prison, or rebelling against rules. One man describes how, when he first entered, the unit Chief Nursing Officer Ken Murray welcomed him with a handshake, and he cringed from a human touch that lacked aggression. Then he was asked to unpack his belongings and handed a pair of scissors – ‘*Scissors*. Prison is a plastic world where you can’t have anything that could be a weapon. And here was a guy giving me ordinary *scissors*, then turning away.’ Trust is terrifying, and so is responsibility. In its two years, the unit has had its share of requests for transfer back to ‘normal’ prison. As Larry Winters (serving life plus 26 years) says of the accustomed repression elsewhere: ‘At least you know what you’re fighting.’

His doubts are justified. For though staff and inmates are working for an ideal – hoping that the philosophy behind the unit’s methods may ‘filter through’ into the prison system as a whole – it is not so easy. Politically, it seems, the Special Unit, far from being a prize exhibit, is an embarrassment. Publicity has exacerbated a natural resistance to reform on the part of the civil servants. When James Boyle was allowed, under supervision, to visit an exhibition of his own sculptures in Edinburgh, sensational press coverage (of the ‘murderers-walking-our-streets’ variety) led to an unofficial, yet insistent, tightening-up, a slow withdrawal of some of the very privileges (which some would call ‘rights’) that have created the unit. In the opinion of the department: ‘The Special Unit tried to go too far too fast.’

Behind this reaction is pressure from obvious quarters. The Scottish Prison Officers’ Association first welcomed the proposal, then criticised methods employed. Among its objections was the assertion that men in other prisons were behaving badly in order to be transferred to the Special Unit; that inmates were publicly identified and had too many privileges; that the unit was assuming an importance out of all proportion to its position within the Scottish prison system. In March last year Ken Murray was removed from the SPOA executive because he issued a statement convincingly refuting its criticisms. Then he was arbitrarily served with notice of transfer – a move which supporters of the unit saw as an attempt to break its tight structure. Mr Murray appealed and won, but the Special Unit was left with the distinct impression that it was being watched with disapproval.

If hostility from prison officers is understandable, the reservations of the Prison Department are not. It is surprising to hear an official state: ‘We are ceasing to see the Special Unit as special anything’ – though less so when one considers the *real* motives behind the experiment. A critical debate in the field of penal reform is between ‘concentration’ or ‘dispersal’ of long-term prisoners with violent tendencies. Officers have always been on the side of concentration – it makes life easier. It should be remembered when an experiment like the Special Unit is praised for its progressive nature, that in the eyes of those in authority it is simply a means of *control*. The requirements of the Department are quite simple: not rehabilita-

tion, but the convenient containment of five or six men who have caused trouble in the past. The issue is taken no further: all questions meet with the ‘It’s too soon to say’ answer; no research study is planned.

A serious cause for grievance within the unit is the official policy that prisoners should eventually be transferred back to the normal system. Inmates like Boyle foresee that, thrust back into the ‘dog eat dog’ situation, with the added glamour/notoriety of having been the chosen few, they would soon revert to old patterns of behaviour. The unit and its methods, they argue, should be seen as an end in itself – a genuine alternative, not just a short-stay experiment.

The department, on the other hand, argues that the prisoners have to prove themselves changed for the better by returning to the environment in which they caused trouble, and showing they are prepared to accept its conditions. Yet the whole impetus behind the Special Unit was based on the assumption that such methods of dealing with such men had failed. ‘You can’t necessarily cure people, but in a certain environment the prisoner might be more *accepting of his sentence*.’

Humane containment in order to breed acceptance? For the prisoners in the Special Unit the idea of what liberal reformists cheer as ‘rehabilitation’ becomes, on one level, a grim absurdity. Rehabilitation for what? Training for what? Good behaviour (even such extraordinary changes as the Special Unit has brought about) cannot influence the sentence since parole for these

men will depend, not on their record within prison, but on the nature of the original offence. For these prisoners there is little hope of clemency. One or two in the unit have started education courses, then given up – because with 30 or 40 years looming before a man in his thirties the sentiments of the 1964 Prison Rules (‘the purpose of training and treatment . . . shall be to establish in them the will to lead a good and useful life on discharge . . .’) seems grimly ironic. Their tension comes from the fact that they have been allowed to come just so far – no more. The notion of humane containment has at its basis expedience: the cynical need to make men tolerate the intolerable.

In the streets of Glasgow passing men and women would call for a return to hanging; and certainly for harsh treatment for criminals. The Special Unit challenges a system of values which demands punishment, without looking too far into the causes of ‘badness’, or the effects of that punishment. Yet it is still a prison: the doors are still locked, the outside world far away, the pressures enormous. What is significant is the fact that, far from learning to ‘accept’ their sentences, and preparing themselves to return quietly to the traditional regime, the men in the Special Unit have begun to *think*. In working for the success of the unit they have rejected completely the values of the prison system, and of the society outside whose requirements it serves. Perhaps this radical development is, to the establishment, the most unacceptable thing of all.

Frank Allaun

Not So Secret Police

It happened during the CND coast-to-coast march. As the Ban the Bomb marchers plodded through Salford on the road to Liverpool a press photographer began taking photo after photo of the demonstration. Every half mile he was waiting for us with his camera at the ready, having overtaken us by car. We felt greatly encouraged, particularly as, until then, the press coverage had been almost nil.

I shouted to the photographer: ‘Which paper are you from?’ He evaded giving an answer. When I repeated the question he murmured something vaguely about a press agency. Alongside me in the march at that moment was Alderman Tom Loftus, a good AUEW man and chairman of the Salford Corporation Watch Committee. As he saw the photographer he hailed him with ‘Hello, George!’

‘So you know the man?’ I said. ‘Which paper is he on?’

‘Don’t be daft,’ Tom replied, ‘he’s our Salford police photographer.’

So that night when we reached Eccles I tipped off the *Guardian* that I would, at our meeting there, tell the facts of this example of police spying. And next day the *Guardian* did us proud. The outcome was that the (Labour-controlled) Salford

Watch Committee members made the chief constable burn the film negatives in their presence. The councillors on the committee had known nothing about the instruction to the photographer to take pictures of everyone on the demonstration – an instruction which must have come direct from the Special Branch or MI-5 in London.

If so much trouble is devoted by the Special Branch and MI-5 to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament how much more attention must they be giving to such ‘sinister’ organisations as the International Socialists, the Communist Party, the International Marxist Group or the Revolutionary Workers’ Party? I wonder how many police informers there must be in their branches. And most of this surveillance is done by men so politically ignorant that they couldn’t tell a Trotskyist from a Primitive Methodist.

Although, theoretically, we parliamentarians govern the country, it would be a mistake to think that MPs are exempt from their attention. There is one Labour Member, now in the Lords, who used to tell me there were a dozen Labour MPs who had their telephones tapped and their correspondence opened. This is difficult to prove. At one time a give-away click could be

heard on picking up the telephone of certain colleagues. I understand that this technical defect has now been overcome.

Usually these practices are restricted to spying, but agent provocateurs or even deliberate forgery are sometimes used. In his *The History and Practice of the Secret Police in Britain* (Joseph Friedman, £6.95) Tony Bunyan describes how the Special Branch helped a group of White Russian emigrés in the stormy days of 1920 to produce forged copies of the Bolshevik daily paper *Pravda*. 'The paper, an exact likeness of the real thing, carried a series of boastful tales of Bolshevik execution squads and murders,' writes the author. 'The London printer insisted on including the firm's imprint on the paper, and the emigrés were grateful to the branch for providing a Yard guillotine to chop this off the bottom of the page. In 1921 the former Labour newspaper the *Daily Herald* exposed the affair and the Home Secretary admitted in the Commons the role of state employees.'

Tony Bunyan recounts from the NEW

STATESMAN of 7 October 1973, an article by Corinna Adam. It described how the career of a school teacher, a supporter of CND, Anti-Apartheid and the Labour Party, was damaged when his applications for posts were turned down after the Special Branch contacted prospective employers.

I have been told by an AUEW official of cases of victimisation of his members. Many militant trade unionists have been sacked by employers who have been quietly tipped off by the Special Branch or sometimes private enterprise 'security' undertakings. Indeed in 4,500 factories with government contracts there is special attention to 'vetting' employees. In these firms the job is usually undertaken by MI-5.

Such police spying may be justified to prevent bomb outrages of the kind committed recently. We can be certain, however, that its use is not confined to those guilty of violence. No political movement should be spied on in this way, whether it is Left, Right or Centre, provided it is non-violent.

Audrey Harvey

The Case of the Student's Wife

The choice before a certain young husband at Bristol University is either that he must leave his wife or ruin his prospects as an architect after nearly five years, and with a job in view. This dilemma demonstrates yet again that if there is a collection of people more popularly resented than the general run of students – never apparently seen as embryo members of the still revered professional classes – it is those of them who have the nerve to marry and then find that financially they can't manage. Perhaps this antipathy comes of not having had in youth a chance of aspiring to anything more glamorous than an apprenticeship. But the same excuse can hardly be made for governments, always heavily representative of the most distinguished universities; and governments have always catered for poverty among students in a grudging and casual way which has made rights less clear and more subject to change and less amenable to appeal than for anyone else except elderly patients in mental hospitals. For the last couple of years, though, certain students have suffered an injustice which is made worse by being treated by the state as an act of God.

In 1974 students, as furnished tenants, became eligible as of right for rent allowances from their local housing authorities. As, however, their grants already included a notional sum for rent, they could not be allowed to benefit from both these sources of public money concurrently. Unknown to almost everybody it was, therefore, decided that the rent element in the grant should be £4 a week. What sort of lodgings this sum might buy was not a point of discussion between the Departments of Education and Science and of the Environment who fixed it. Last year that sum went up to £5,

and weekly rent allowances can now only be made on the excess of that.

Our would-be architect, Peter, was typically unaware of the existence of rent allowances for private tenants for months after financial need became desperate. When last summer he married Marcia, who is 32 and had divorced her husband, she was easily supporting herself and her three children as a secretary. Suddenly she became severely ill with kidney trouble, all the more dangerous because she was pregnant. With no time to have established an independent right to any form of national insurance, instant poverty set in: her income fell from over £40 to £12 (maintenance and family allowances) a week. She would be entitled to supplementary benefit for herself and the children only if Peter left home: as a married woman she, absurdly, has no right of her own; and Peter himself is barred, at least during term, as not being 'available for work'. He is equally barred, though, from Family Income Supplement because he is not working full-time in the sense of being employed: a double discrimination uniquely applied to students. As Peter's income is a mere £790 a year he would normally be poor enough for a rent allowance covering the rent, officially fixed as fair, of £7.75. What he got was £2.75. And Bristol did not think fit to tell him that the £5 exclusion rule was in operation. Otherwise he might have been advised to 'make representations', which is all one can do when a local authority decision, such as this one, is in one's own particular circumstances patently unfair.

The unfairness of applying the £5 rule in Peter's case lay in the fact that he was not being supported, as a student, by public funds. Apart from that curiosity known

as the 'minimum grant' of £50 a year, which almost all students get, and for which he had not asked, he was supported by his father. And it is relevant to mention here that he might still have got allowances for his step-children on hardship grounds (via a special fund administered by the Department of Health and Social Security) provided his father agreed to be means-tested to see if he could afford to pay more. As he not unnaturally disapproved of the marriage he could not even be asked. But what seems outrageous is that students, in this and other predicaments should, years after they come of age, be officially treated like dependent children.

At some point in the long-drawn-out process of trying to find a way out, the DoE thought it had hit on one. Local authorities have power to increase rent allowances by 10 per cent if they think fit; and in this case strong representations had already been made to Bristol's chief executive on grounds of worsening illness and poverty and because no help had been forthcoming even from the social services department – which later denied being asked. As its answer to the DoE's suggestion, Bristol now stated that as the rent allowance already covered the whole excess of £5, to pay more would be to exceed the amount of rent charged, and that discretion could not run to that. The DoE referred this decision to its lawyers. Already it was only by threatening Bristol with publicity that anything in the way even of a civil response had been forthcoming.

Throughout there had been great concern to defend the local authority's absolute rectitude, but no trace of any sympathy for the plight of the family. No one had even told them that they had a right to a rate rebate. There was no evidence of social services being officially asked to help; and, on being privately implored to do so, when it seemed likely that Marcia might not even survive, their reaction was to ask *her* to visit *them*. No departmental money was spent on trying to keep the family going although the marriage was under a shattering strain and the youngest child, aged four, might have to go into care now that her mother could not properly look after her. Power to provide cash in this sort of situation has existed since 1973 but with 'funds running low' a charity was approached instead; but since it can provide only £13 a month the family, already fathoms deep in debt, has been blandly advised to deal with its affairs by the simple method of getting into still more debt. It seems that the NUS, which has fought a brilliant campaign on the rent allowance issue, knows of no case quite so bad.

Legal opinion eventually was that Bristol was probably right. Almost unbelievably though, the DoE wrote: 'We feel this is a reasonable view to take because in this case' [here I add italics] '*Mr X is receiving the full amount of his eligible rent from public funds, either through the rent element in his grant or through his present rent allowance.*' Had they forgotten that he was not supported on a grant – not at all? When a Department of State alters the facts of a case in this way, it would seem to be a portent by no means affecting students only; and an alarm should be sounded.

London Diary

□ Whatever else Jim Callaghan may have succeeded in doing in three and a half weeks, he has not disposed of election fever. More and more people seem convinced that he's going to make a dash for electoral growth next October. I remain sceptical, though I *am* interested in (as I am sure he is) the Scottish dimension. Any date beyond October and the Government is going to be bogged down in pushing its Devolution Bill through the Commons. It can't, of course, guarantee that it can deliver on it: it will have to be taken on the floor of the House and an 'unholy alliance' between the bulk of the Tory Party and sufficient Labour dissidents could yet thwart its passage, just as the last effort at constitutional reform (the House of Lords No 2 Bill) was wrecked in 1969. Which, then, is better – to offer the Scottish Nationalists a lick and a promise or to go for the jackpot of delivering to them the Assembly, the Chief Executive and all the rest? In electoral terms there's a lot to be said for the Government proving to the people of Scotland that the Devolution White Paper was not made of pie-crust: the SNP would certainly have a harder time in an election after the Assembly had been set up than one in which it remained simply a blueprint. But what about the post-election situation? If we are, as I increasingly suspect, in a permanent situation of minority governments, what wise Prime Minister delivers everything he has on offer before the post-election bargaining starts? I don't envy Callaghan his conundrum and am thankful that 'he's got his job to do and I've got mine'.

□ If Dr Kissinger's African trip achieves nothing else, let's hope it puts an end to the device by which his thoughts and reflections upon the world are imparted to the rest of us through the medium of 'a senior US official travelling with the Secretary'. Everyone knows by now that 'senior official' is simply our Henry's doppelgänger – and I fully agreed with Reginald Maudling's impatience with so transparent a subterfuge when he talked about it on the *World This Weekend* last Sunday. It's not, of course, a fiction that Kissinger himself actually invented; even the bluff and hearty Dean Rusk used to have himself described as 'a high State Department official' when he held his weekly Friday night briefing with a select group of sympathetic correspondents during the days of the Vietnam war. But it remains a ruse that Kissinger, with typical German thoroughness, has taken to the higher reaches of ridiculousness. Who else, after all, could have come up with the 'travelling with . . .' bit? What, I can't help wondering, happens to the 'phantom' Henry Kissinger when the 'real' one comes through the curtains and joins the press in its section of the plane? Presumably he just vanishes into thin air. In which case wouldn't it be nice if one of these days both of them dissolved simultaneously?

□ The fiasco of Scotland Yard's expensive

and virtually unproductive advertising campaign to attract members of the immigrant community into the Metropolitan Police has set some people thinking. Might not black reluctance be due not only to the hostility aroused by the insensitive attitude of some white policemen in places like Brixton and Notting Hill, but also to the suspicion that they would simply be regarded as token symbols on the beat, with little chance of promotion to the higher ranks? For many years now, police officers from the new Commonwealth have come to Britain for their training. Why not invite senior officers from some of these forces to return here on secondment, thus providing an example and an encouragement for potential recruits in this country? The idea has been put to Police Commissioner Sir Robert Mark, but sadly his initial response has not been particularly encouraging. Some pressure from Labour MPs, via the Home Secretary, might produce a more positive attitude, as well as providing yet another salutary postscript to our colonial past.

□ Some sharp things have been said (even in this column) about BBC Radio's review of the weeklies, the *Weekly World* – but I still mourn its passing. Honor Balfour, consistently one of its best presenters, delivered the final programme in the series last Saturday – and very elegantly she did it too (not bothering to conceal her contempt for the successor, gimmick programme, *Between the Lines*, that some young trendy seems to have inflicted on the BBC in its place). Two things, however, puzzled me in what Miss Balfour had to say. The first was her statement that the programme had started in 1965 – when I can clearly remember listening to the present 'shadow' Chancellor, Sir Geoffrey Howe, earning an honest penny by reviewing the weeklies in the same, or some very similar, programme at least as long ago as 1963. The second, and perhaps more serious, arises from the elaborate tribute she paid to the BBC newsreaders (starting with John Snagge) who traditionally had the responsibility for intoning the actual 'quotes' that the reviewers wanted to use. And that was just the trouble: 'intone' they did. If only the BBC had had the wit to realise what Granada accepted long ago that, whereas announcers can read, actors can actually bring words to life, the *Weekly World* could, I am sure, have lasted as long as its elder and more animated sister, *What the Papers Say*.

□ The papers have been printing hundreds of column-inches on the dangers of asbestos as if we had only just become aware of the nasty nature of this lethal mineral. But the fact that asbestos dust can kill has been known since the beginning of the century, and the first asbestos regulations were produced 45 years ago. However, rules are useless unless they are enforced, and the Ombudsman's recent criticism of fatal deficiencies at the Cape Asbestos factory in Yorkshire has drawn attention to only one example of the manner in which both manufacturers and government inspectors have been neglecting their duties over the years. There has been a conspiracy of silence. The Asbestos Information Committee, which is sponsored by the industry, has done its

best to play down the dangers, so that only very recently, for example, have we heard much about the risks arising from the use of asbestos products in the home, although it has been known for years that even a tiny dose may cause a peculiarly malignant cancer. Asbestos is outstandingly valuable in countless applications, from brake linings to floor tiles, and we couldn't easily abandon the stuff. But we are entitled to expect that asbestos, and, indeed, all other potentially dangerous industrial materials, are handled in accordance with strict rules, rigidly enforced, and that no kind of shyness, let alone secrecy, concerning hazards to health is tolerated.

□ Alma Birk, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Environment, tells a nice story arising out of last week's Foyles literary lunch. The lunch was in honour of Lilli Palmer and her new book *Change Lobsters and Dance*. Not surprisingly, nearly everyone there was a star of stage or screen – ranging from John Clements through Robert Morley to Diana Rigg. When the moment came for the guests to add their autographs to copies of Miss Palmer's book, our Alma was a little apprehensive lest, being a mere politician, she might not find herself a bit of a fish out of water. Who on earth would want her signature on the fly-leaf? But she needn't have worried. A clearly theatrical person was soon in front of her holding out her copy. The dialogue then went as follows:

Theatrical person: Would you autograph my book please?

Alma Birk (surprised but gratified): Certainly. Theatrical person: What are you in now, dear?

Alma Birk (after a pause): The Government. Theatrical person: I haven't seen that yet.

Alma Birk (rallying): Never mind, darling, it'll run and run.

Crucifer

This England

Prizes: £1.50 book token for first entry, £1 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

□ Monty's funeral had a surprising effect on my Labrador dog. When trumpets sounded the Last Post he stuck his nose on the screen, threw back his head and howled like a banshee. He has never behaved like this before. I believe it was his own doggy farewell to a great man. – Letter in *Sunday People* (J. Whibley)

□ The memories of Maurice are of his best years, and they must take pride of place, but is worth recalling that even in his two last years, when his mind was but a sad wreck of its former strength, and he may not even have known who he was, he was still able to condemn the admitting of women undergraduates as 'absolutely frightful'. – Obituary in *Brasenose College Chronicle* (O. M. Lovell)

□ Lady Dartmouth's husband was said to be unavailable for comment today at their country home in King's Langley, Hertfordshire. Barbara Cartland, 72, said today: 'I won't say no comment because that sounds like a trade unionist. To speak about a family matter would be very vulgar.' – *Evening News* (Jimmie Pearse)

A. J. P. Taylor

Class War: 1926

The 50th anniversary of the General Strike is an excuse for some reminiscences by a member of the other ranks in the class war. In 1926 I was in my second year at Oxford. I had been a member of the ILP since 1921, when I was 15. I joined the Oxford University Labour Club as soon as I went up – not an easy process since my college, Oriel, had no college secretary and I had to seek out the club chairman, A. L. Rowse. I must have had an appetite for joining things. One evening an acquaintance at the Labour Club asked me: 'Why aren't you a member of the Communist Party?' Offhand I could not think of an answer, and on these inadequate grounds joined the Communist Party also.

The University Communist Party had at that time two members. Tom Driberg was one and I was the other. We held our meetings in Tom's elegant Christ Church rooms. The curtains were drawn; candles were burning and Tom shuffled round the room to the strains of a hot jazz record. We divided our duties. Tom sold the *Daily Worker* (or was it still the *Workers' Weekly?*) at the factory gates. I made Communist or at any rate left-wing speeches at the Labour Club. I did not take my political activities very seriously. I had a busy social life. I was in training with the college eight. Also I still had the foolish idea that lessons could be learnt from history. If another coal crisis came – and one was surely coming – either the union leaders would back down as they had done on Black Friday or the Government would back down as they had done on Red Friday. Maybe this time both would back down, as indeed they very nearly did at the last moment.

However, towards the end of April, it began to look as though there might really be a general strike. Perhaps the revolution was coming after all. Tom and I, who would presumably lead the revolution in Oxford, thought we should get instructions from headquarters. We went up to London in my car. At 16 King Street we found the shutters up and the door bolted. After much banging on our part there was a rattling of chains. An elderly Communist called Bob Stewart appeared. He eyed us sourly and said: 'There's no one here. I'm only the caretaker. Get along home with ye.' These were the only instructions I ever received from the Communist Party of Great Britain.

In Oxford undergraduates were being enrolled as strike-breakers and special constables. The Labour Club held a meeting to protest against the university's taking sides in the class war. A. D. Lindsay, the Master of Balliol, came and explained that the university was not involved: it had merely lent its premises to the government recruiting officers. The club did not accept this explanation and duly passed a motion of protest. The undergraduate volunteers were eager to be off. Many of them had fathers or elder brothers who had served in the war. Now, they felt, their own chance had

come. Once more, 'God be thanked who has matched us with His Hour'. It was August 1914 all over again. The volunteers saw themselves gallantly at war against the revolution. One of them said to me: 'I wonder whether I shall ever come back.' The enrolment was Tom Brown's Last Stand. Nearly all the former public school boys enlisted. The grammar school boys stayed quietly in Oxford and went on with their work.

I, too, wanted to mount the barricades, though of course on the other side. There seemed little chance of doing this in Oxford, where all that was offered was missionary work in the surrounding villages. I decided to go home to industrial Lancashire. I sought permission from my college dean, Dr Wand, a muscular Christian, who was later Bishop of London. He puzzled over my request and then said: 'Other men have gone down to do their duty. I suppose you are entitled to go down to do what you think is yours.' At any rate I did better than some of my friends in Cambridge who got into trouble with their college authorities for refusing to enlist.

Norman Cameron was also anxious to join in the class war and came with me in my car to Preston. I found my father busy on the strike committee from morning to night, though I never discovered what he did – treasurer, deputy chairman, something like that. But what was there for me to do? There was no need to whip up support for a strike that was solid already. I put the problem to my father. He had a ready answer: 'You and I are the only two people in the Labour movement here who can drive a car. There will be plenty for you to do.' He exaggerated a little as he usually did: at least one union secretary had a car. But broadly what he said was true: driving a car was then a rare accomplishment.

There were union secretaries to take round the branches, strike pay to be distributed, returns of those on strike to be collected. Sometimes we went to encourage weaker strike committees in such Conservative strongholds as Blackpool. Norman Cameron also found useful activity. He joined a jobbing printer from the ILP and the two brought out a daily bulletin, most of which Norman wrote himself, though he did not contribute any poetry. I kept them supplied with newsprint which I collected from the *Daily Herald* in Manchester.

These longer journeys made a great impression on me. Nowadays a transport strike only means more cars on the roads. Then, in the words of the strike reports, 'everything stopped', at any rate in industrial Lancashire. The roads were empty. There were no trams, and mile after mile of deserted tram-lines has more impact than a mere absence of buses. I used to come back through a string of mining villages. In Preston and other towns the cotton mills and engineering shops were still open, and there

were few strikers hanging around. In the mining villages there were strikers on every street corner. Only cars with a TUC sticker could pass. There were few local strike bulletins and the strikers distrusted the BBC news. They wanted to know how things were really going, and I had to address improvised open-air meetings, my first experience of public speaking.

Power seemed to be ours whenever we wanted to take it. I often asked my father when the strike committees would go over to positive action. He always gave me the same answer. This was not a general strike. It was a sympathetic strike in support of the miners, and it was the Government's job, not ours, to run the country. I am not sure whether my father was always so law-abiding. One evening a conspiratorial figure, with a hook instead of a right hand, called and talked privately to my father for a long time. Afterwards my father said 'I must go to London at once' and drove off. Perhaps he was merely reinforcing the TUC courier service that ran every day from London to Glasgow and back.

A day or two later my father came home radiant. He had just learnt from the one Labour member of the Watch Committee that the Government intended to arrest the leading members of strike committees and that his name was on the list. He said: 'They are losing their nerve. Now we shall see where the power really is.' He packed an overnight bag and waited hopefully for the knock on the door. It never came. Instead my father came home white-faced and with the duodenal pain that always racked him when he was upset. He said: 'The strike's over. We have been betrayed by our leaders.' That was all. My father never mentioned the strike again. When I next went home he was busy on the Board of Guardians. He claimed that his telephone was tapped for years afterwards but this may have been a product of his romantic imagination.

Norman and I went back to Oxford the same afternoon. The volunteers trickled back over the next few days. The special constables felt that they had performed a gallant service. The strike-breakers often resented that they had unloaded supplies far from essential. Many of them were distressed at the outcome: it had not occurred to them what the defeat of the strike would mean for the miners. Also they had developed a respect for what they called 'the other side'. They were not offended at what I had done. On the contrary, it created a bond between us; and we were far more friendly than we had been before. Their disapproval, so far as they had any, was directed against the 'shirkers' who had stayed in Oxford and not taken sides at all.

Soon afterwards those of us who had served on the right side had a dinner in New College. There were all the familiar faces from the Labour Club. One face was new to me; I asked who it was. The answer: 'He's a man called Gaitskell who turned up on the second day of the strike and said he wanted to help.' I have read somewhere that Gaitskell's rooms were wrecked because of his activities during the strike. You can expect anything from Wykehamists, but at any rate the wrecking did not take place the night I was there.

My experiences in the General Strike

cured me of communism. In Preston the Communist Party had played no part in the strike, and the few Communists there were either useless or a nuisance. I decided that the Communist Party was not for me and quietly lapsed, thus escaping the soul torments that troubled so many intellectuals

during the 1930s. The Communist Party was not the only ship that I abandoned. The college eight seemed to me unpromising and I used the excuse of my ten-day break in training to resign from it. I was right about that too: the Oriel first eight went down every night.

First Person

Arthur Marshall

Yours Truly

Nowadays I frequently hear talk on the wireless about what is evidently a current matter of concern but which, as so often with technical subjects, is incomprehensible to me. I refer to people complaining about the erosion of their differentials. Now what on earth can these be? Do I, as a NEW STATESMAN writer, have differentials? If so, are they being eroded? If they are, who is being so beastly as to erode them? What should I do to preserve any differentials? To whom should I write? Would an anxious letter from me ever get printed in these very pages?

Well, it might. Those that write letters to the NEW STATESMAN are, and very properly, on the whole a serious-minded body. Helpfully they provide comments on and solutions to many of life's complexities – abortion, Mr Heath, dockland, Papal pronouncements on sex, uppish adolescents, Lord Ryder, noise levels, immigration, students, Solzhenitsyn, and other agitating matters that now bring one nervous twitches in their wake.

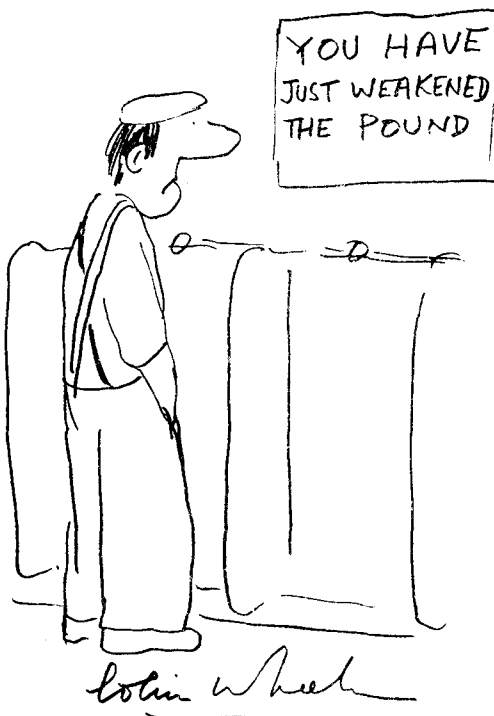
But, if turned down here, would my worries ever get an airing in, say, *The Times*? Doubtful. Too serious a subject, probably. At just about this period of the year (I write in mid-April) all *Times* readers are everywhere on the alert for the first cuckoo. What is the earliest record of a hearing? Who can ever forget the excitement on 6 February 1913, when, long before summer was icumen in, Ihude sang cuckoo to a Mr Lydekker and his under-gardener in the heart of leafy Hertfordshire. They hastened, naturally, to inform *The Times*, but had later to confess that their ears had deceived them and the gladsome sound turned out to have come from a bricklayer melodiously at work nearby.

We owe this useful information to *The First Cuckoo*, a wholly fascinating selection, by Kenneth Gregory, from letters to *The Times* between 1900 and 1975 and provided for us by the astute Messrs Allen and Unwin (if we can shell out £4.50). The immediate impression one gets from a first reading is of a delightful frivolity. The idea that all such letters emanated from Pall Mall and were penned, in mounting fury, by choleric old colonels, is plainly a myth.

The correspondents here gathered together (and not an Archbishop, Lord Chief Justice, Director-General of the BBC or Warden of All Souls among them) are from a wide

range of professions, social statuses and bank balances. Top People may Take *The Times* but they are by no means the only ones. Fortunately, the great crises of the century, about which we already know too depressingly much, are only mentioned *en passant*, preference being given to wit and invective, innocence and nostalgia. 'The sole criterion for inclusion has been a letter's readability,' assures Mr Gregory. We are in good hands.

Writers have considered almost any facts of value. Those of us who have been wondering, and for years now, who could possibly have been the very first bishop to wear spectacles need wonder no more, for here is the answer. It was, clearly, Walter de Stapledon (he was lynched by the mob in Exeter in 1326, his specs being subsequently valued at the considerable sum of 2s). And the first horse to enjoy assisted eyesight? Why, that was a Manchester gelding in 1888, the oculist prescribing concave spectacles for its weak eyes. The horse, with the gig-lamps fitted securely on, 'shewed signs of the keenest pleasure'. If put out to pasture without his spectacles, he would hang moodily and myopically about, whinnying in a plaintive minor key.



There is no end to the astonishments. How extraordinary to find John Masefield displaying a quite unexpected and detailed knowledge of the white-slave trade, its evil tentacles reaching as far afield as Shepton Mallet and Stoke Poges. He writes, much concerned, about 'good-looking housemaids' being enticed to the capital, there getting snapped up at £50 a go and whisked off to the Continent in a tall ship with a star to steer them by: and thence, by easy stages, to Buenos Aires, then rated the peak place for gentlemen requiring free-and-easy female companionship.

Every day esoteric information of the most varied kind is unselfishly passed on. The leader (Imam) of the Mosque at Woking lets it be known that the Mosque neither stocks nor sells Turkish Delight (please apply elsewhere). Side-saddle is the *only* way for expectant mothers. To put paid to mosquitos, sprinkle your bed with grated myrrh. If poor children were to walk shoeless to school it would beneficially harden their feet and prevent colds. Conan Doyle played for the MCC and once dismissed W. G. Grace with the loftiest donkey-drop ever seen at Lord's. Hitler was not a corporal but a lance-corporal. Grey squirrels can make quite a tasty casserole ('make' in the sense of 'form the main ingredient of': c.f., 'he made the evening').

Sometimes a subject sets off a chain reaction. A claim from Sussex to be the county with the most curious surnames (Pitchfork, Slybody, Stillborne, Fidge, Padge and Beatup) instantly brings showers of weird names from all over, including those of villages (Helions Bumpstead, Mucking, Plush and Shellow Bowells, which only just avoids sounding like something else).

In due course, the famous and eminent pop up. Bernard Shaw complains that at Covent Garden he found himself behind a lady with half a dead bird pinned decoratively over her right ear, adding that if he had turned up at the doors with a dead grouse on top of his head he would have been refused admission. Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland speaks out for allowing policemen to chew chewing-gum ('It has a steadying effect on their nerves. I encourage my chauffeur to chew'). P. G. Wodehouse supplied the answer to the burning question as to just how far Bertie Wooster's chin receded.

Lady Edward Cecil, bewailing, and as early as 1910, the inefficiency of our railways, was outraged at being charged excess for her and her maid's hand luggage ('One has learned to expect anything from the South-Eastern Railway Company'). And in 1933, and in the same month that Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, the lynx-eyed and wide-awake Neville Chamberlain wrote to say that he had spotted a grey wagtail in St James's Park.

Particularly recommendable are the choices from the war years, both the Kaiser's and Hitler's. Should children wear gas-masks when blackberrying? Were dachshunds being cruelly treated because of their German connection? If meat is in short supply, why ever don't people switch to grouse? One wonders again, and for the umpteenth time, how on earth we muddled through.

Letters to the Editor

Devlin on Identification

Sir, On the first reading, Lord Devlin's Report on identification, published on Tuesday, gladdens the heart of any victim of mistaken identity. It states unequivocally that it is totally unsafe to convict on the evidence of eye-witnesses alone. But a closer reading leaves the distinct feeling that the Devlin Committee has side-stepped the real issue.

This is that there must be independent evidence of a corroborative nature other than identification before a suspect can be charged, let alone tried and convicted. Devlin accepts this in principle, but, instead of recommending legislation to that effect, relies on the judge to safeguard the position of the defendant by giving clear warning to the jury.

The justification for this is that there are exceptional cases (kidnapping is one cited) where the identification is so clear that to maintain a requirement for corroboration would simply provide a charter for the guilty. But the report then adopts the curious stance of generalising from the exceptional and arguing that a blanket requirement for corroboration is undesirable.

What the report should have done was to propose a clear law under which identity evidence alone would be an insufficient basis upon which to prosecute. In the exceptional cases mentioned, it should then have placed the burden on the prosecution to justify to the judge and jury why the identity evidence was so certain that the normal requirements for corroboration could be set aside. This would be far safer than to rely on suitable warnings or directions from judges who have failed so conspicuously in the past to protect the interests of mistaken identity victims.

The Devlin Report falls short in other respects as well. It relies too heavily on the police to ensure that suspects are treated fairly. Devlin's reasoning on failing to insist that a solicitor should always be present on identity parades is woolly in the extreme. From my own experience it is essential to have a solicitor present to ensure that the suspect's interests are protected and to act as an independent witness should irregularities occur.

The report predictably demonstrated a 'top-down' view of the law and ignored what happens on the ground in real life. For instance, procedure could easily be improved by:

(a) Ensuring that a suspect is put on a parade with people from an area where he lives or 'fits' (so that someone from, say, Bermondsey, is not paraded in Hampstead).

(b) Stipulating that the suspect is introduced to the parade without other members of the parade knowing who he is.

(c) Proposing that parades are held at places other than the police station to which the investigating officers belong.

However, Devlin cannot be considered in the vacuum that its terms of reference necessitated. The real problem begins at the police station, where the police tend to exploit the vagaries of identity evidence to make charges stick on innocent people. From my own experience any citizen is at risk. But those with a previous record are especially vulnerable, as indeed is shown by the cases of Dougherty and Virag, which were analysed by Devlin: it is simply too easy to get a witness to flick through police photos, pick someone, and then persuade the jury that a man with a previous conviction should be found guilty.

The continuing imprisonment of George Davis (whose only previous conviction was for receiving a radiogram) shows how the pro-

cess can escalate into a deliberate miscarriage of justice. Davis could not have been convicted if the Devlin recommendations had been in force at the time he was tried. That is why the Home Secretary should reopen his case and pardon him. That is also why speedy reform is necessary: it is vital that the Devlin Report, whatever its shortcomings, is not left to gather dust in the Home Office.

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Committee on Abortion

Sir, The extraordinary behaviour of the House of Commons relating to the Select Committee on the Abortion (Amendment) Bill has become even more astonishing. In March six opponents of Mr James White's Bill resigned from the Select Committee in disgust, and nothing was done to fill the vacancies. On 19 March the House filled one only of these six vacancies. Mr Nicholas Winterton, a sponsor of the Bill, replaced Sir George Sinclair, an opponent. This leaves the committee five short of the full complement of 15 laid down in the House of Commons motion of 9 February. What makes matters worse is that the rump of the original committee consists wholly of supporters of Mr James White's Bill. This is both irregular and unfair.

Also questionable is the way in which the Select Committee has altered its title. When it was appointed it was described in *Hansard* as 'Abortion (Amendment) Bill (Select Committee)' and the terms of reference were 'to consider the matters contained in the Abortion (Amendment) Bill committed to a Select Committee in the last Session of Parliament'. Since then the title appears to have been shortened to 'Select Committee on Abortion'. This tends to give a misleading impression of its scope. All indications are that the committee itself is now hearing evidence which goes quite outside its remit.

The only bright spot in this dismal scene is that the Committee of Privileges dismissed the complaint made by a thin-skinned MP against the young women who said rude things about the Select Committee as it is now composed. They were quite right to question its credentials. The present unsatisfactory position should not be overlooked when this one-sided Select Committee makes its report.

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Left and the Environment

Sir, While rightly criticising most of the nominal Left for its acceptance of growth and indifference to environmental effects, Jeremy Bugler (NS 16 April) commits several howlers.

There is a longish passage in *Capital* in the course of which Marx says that

All progress in capitalist agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the worker, but also of robbing the soil . . . The more a country starts its development on the foundation of large scale industry, like the United States for example, the more rapid is the process of destruction. Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the bringing together of various processes into a social whole, only by undermining the original sources of all wealth - the soil and the labourer.

That largely refutes Dr Schumacher, whom Bugler quotes as saying 'that Marx's labour

theory of value makes the "devastating error" of treating as valuable only things we have made ourselves'. What really is devastating is the crass confusion, by Schumacher and Bugler, between Marx's use of 'value' here, which was simply *exchange-value*, and the *sources* of wealth which Marx obviously recognised. If 'small is beautiful', is also this huge parody of Marx?

Some critics of Marx, e.g. G. D. H. Cole and Joan Robinson, have powerfully argued that the labour theory of *exchange-value* is unnecessary to the theory of *surplus value* or exploitation. But that does not annul the howler.

Finally, though Marx made various mistakes (only little men don't), it is pretty certain that, if alive today, he (and Engels) would categorise what is now called socialism (or communism) as in fact state capitalism, its profit still derived from wage labour, and its purposes being just as much accumulation, growth, and competition on the world market as were those of 'free enterprise'. Those purposes indeed entail capitalist technology, vast squander, and destruction, and they are the contrary of all that 'socialism' formerly meant.

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Christchurch, Dorset

At the National

Sir, There are some points I'd like to take up in Mervyn Jones's piece last week about the new National Theatre. He is mistaken in believing that the free cast lists offered at the Old Vic aren't provided on the South Bank. They are - with a plus. They contain, as well, two pages of NT news. The programmes themselves he finds 'a lot thinner' and 'less interesting' than at the Vic, though he's going back a bit, for he says they were 'half a crown when I last bought one'. Unfortunately those old programmes did not sell well, and also were so expensive to produce that they lost a big sum annually. The new programmes - of a slightly larger page size than at the Vic - sell more copies, and at the moment break even. They are thinner, it's true. But this is due partly to doing away with four inside advertising pages in favour of a single back-cover advertisement (exclusive, so yielding greater revenue), and partly to our feeling that the old programmes were, for the present taste, too fatly filled with oblique editorial material.

Mervyn Jones also comments that he was easily able to get good seats for *John Gabriel Borkman* a week and a half ahead, whereas at the Vic for a popular production 'you had to show up when the box office opened on the first morning of the booking period and queue for an hour'. He concludes from this that business isn't good or the voucher system isn't working. Neither is true. We are packed, more so even than at the Vic, as most interested people know; and one of the chief aims of the new booking system is to make it easier to get seats nearer the time in spite of great pressure on the box office. Still, Mervyn Jones *did* like the free concerts of live music every evening before the play. And that's something.

JOHN GOODWIN

Head, Publicity/Publications

National Theatre
South Bank
London SE1

Sir, It is not fair to judge the Lyttelton Theatre (the new National Theatre) without having visited it. However, with the impossible new booking arrangements I cannot see how I shall ever have the time, patience or money to attend a performance there.

I fully agree with Mervyn Jones's criticisms (NS 23 April) that, however good the architecture, there must inevitably be different sight

lines. Also, I would suggest audio lines; the hard of hearing and the hard of seeing will inevitably suffer from the voucher system. The price of a guaranteed seat at £4.35 is exorbitant. The possibility of attending by using the voucher service and collecting a seat two hours before the performance is ruled out unless one works in the area of Waterloo. Furthermore, being a late riser, there is no theatrical production on earth for which I would get up at 6 a.m. in order to get one of the cheap tickets at 8.30 a.m. on the day of the performance.

In the past, we have been very regular attenders at the Old Vic, and as a result I do not feel too deprived at the moment as we have seen most of the productions in the current repertoire. If one was on the pre-mailing list, one sent off for tickets several weeks in advance and was able to stipulate the exact seats wanted and in most cases, the booking office was very efficient and if they were not able to provide precisely the seats wanted, they gave the nearest equivalent. This, in our case, is particularly important as my husband is hard of hearing. He is also an impatient man and takes his theatre-going very seriously. If he does not like the seats and cannot see or hear properly, he walks out immediately. I am not going to risk paying £4.70 only to find ourselves frustrated members of the audience.

As long as the present ticket system continues, National Theatre productions will be a pleasure which I will have to forgo.

VIVIKA MORTENSEN

46 Kenton Court
London W14

Sir, I was intrigued by Mervyn Jones's description of his neighbours at the National Theatre who 'looked as though they came from Shepton Mallet'. Could he elaborate a little? I came from there to London some years ago and regularly revisit it, and my practised eye cannot distinguish its residents on their visits to the London theatres. Could Mervyn Jones let us in on his secret gift, as I would find it quite valuable when I want news from home?

JOHN MILLER

33 Blenheim Road
London W4

The Real Iraq

Sir, Christopher Hitchens's informative article on Iraq (NS 9 April) fails, alas, to press far enough his usual strategy of distinguishing reality from appearance – a task all the more vital in the face of claims made by dictatorial governments such as that of Iraq.

Though it may have been 'the first to call for the use of oil as a political weapon against Israel and her backers', it actually increased its oil production during the October war, undermining the boycott agreed upon by the Arab states. Its leader, Saddam Hussain, could be described as 'perhaps the first visionary Arab statesman since Nasser', but surely only in irony: he presided over terror and atrocities against Iraqi citizens, both Arabs and Kurds, and the character of his vision and statesmanship can be judged by his assertion (quoted in the *Financial Times* of 7 March 1974) that 'we cooperate with somebody to achieve our aim and then we chop his head off'.

There may be 'no getting round' the point that its present Government has made Iraq 'strong and respected', but one must ask – strong against whom? and respected by whom? Certainly not by the Kurds, whose end at Iraqi and Iranian hands was indeed 'very painful'. It is not only 'former members of the Barzani armed forces' who are 'being moved to the south', but the existing Kurdish civilian population: about 200,000 people have already been deported to the salinated areas of the Middle

and Lower Euphrates, where they are living in very poor conditions, in straw huts, lacking both food and shelter. A policy of Arabisation is replacing the Kurdish population by Egyptian peasants and Iraqi Arabs. And Iraq and Iran cooperate not only against Kurdish patriots but in the suppression of all opposition to their respective repressive regimes.

STEVEN LUKES

Balliol College
Oxford

The Ghost of Lord Reith

Sir, Dennis Potter is employed, presumably, to provide your readers with penetrating and occasionally brilliant criticism of the programme output of the BBC and ITV, not to indulge in hysterical recrimination against the Corporation for refusing to transmit his play *Brimstone and Treacle*. I am genuinely surprised that you agreed to publish such a self-pitying, ill-argued piece of self-justification.

I find myself, rather to my surprise, on Alasdair Milne's side in this affair. I know Mr Milne to be a conscientious, even fastidious, official faced with the difficult task of presiding over the BBC TV output during a period of great moral confusion both within the BBC and in the country at large. His argument that it may, in certain instances, be right to outrage viewers in order to get across a particular point, but that there is no case for outraging them unless that point is clearly made, seems to me impeccable. It might, indeed, have been equally applied to Mr Potter's first play, *Double Dare*, which has caused offence to a number of people and whose meaning, in my opinion, was far from clear. This is not to argue in favour of censorship. It is to argue in favour of clarity.

Nor is it helpful to invoke the ghost of Lord Reith. Paradoxically, a Lord Reith may be just what the Corporation requires at this present time, just as the country may be thought to require a Winston Churchill. Mr Milne is not the Reithian type (he is too nice and too timid) but I hope that one will emerge in due course – not so much to put the Dennis Potters in their place as to restate the principles and values for which the Corporation stands in the context of what is happening in our society.

WILFRED DE'ATH

6 Regina Court
40 Fitzjohn's Avenue
London NW3

Sir, I was interested to read Dennis Potter's account (NS 23 April) of the fate that overtook his television play *Brimstone and Treacle* at the hands of the BBC censors.

I had a somewhat similar experience with BBC Radio 30 years ago. A documentary I had written on the merchant navy for a special series then running, entitled 'Focus', was accepted by the BBC features department, duly processed for transmission, and announced in the *Radio Times* for broadcasting on the following Thursday.

On the Monday prior to the proposed transmission I received a call from the BBC to come to Broadcasting House for urgent discussions. On arriving there I found myself confronted not only with members of the BBC staff, including the head of the features department, but also with representatives of the Shipping Federation, headed by Sir (something or other) Snedden, its chairman. Sir Whatnot Snedden objected to practically every line in the script. The BBC caved in. The programme was never broadcast.

One wonders in the case of *Brimstone and Treacle*, was it Alasdair Milne alone who took the decision to ban the play?

JACK WODDIS

149 Coventry Road
Ilford, Essex

Death Cries

Sir, I knew Lady Desbrough from 1920 till her death. I married one of her daughters and I also served in France in the first war. So I am in some position to assess the conclusions reached by your reviewer Anthony Storr under the caption 'Death Cries' (NS 16 April). He says:

Nicholas Mosley has subjected an aristocratic family to a scrutiny which mercilessly dispels any lingering notion that this was a Golden Age. Indeed, he affirms that this was a society so futile and unrealistic and so caught up in fantasy that its members looked for and welcomed war.

Who was this society? Looking through the Taplow Court visitors' book for 1914 I see the guests included Lord Balfour, the Winston Churchills, the D'Abernons, Lord Hugh Cecil, Lord Curzon, and H. A. L. Fisher as regular visitors; the Herbert Asquiths, the Raymond Asquiths, Lord Kitchener, Rudyard Kipling and H. G. Wells as rather less regular. So much for the 'futile and unrealistic fantasy-ridden Taplow society'.

Mr Storr does not actually accuse the Grenfell set of bringing England into the war. But he obviously believes they had a good deal to do with it. 'Though only a small part of the population they were the leaders and set the tone. Romantic excess seems to flourish in societies which have given up aiming at realistic goals and the end of romantic excess is always death.' Not a word, be it noted, about the agonies of thinking, and the deep divisions in the Liberal cabinet that actually took the country into the war. Not a word as to whether they were right or wrong to do so. Not a word about the German and Austrian romantics and their death wish.

Mr Storr obviously has an obsessional dislike of the British aristocracy. Any evidence that lends support to this prejudice is faithfully developed. Anything, however relevant, that does not support it is ignored. It is rather as if today some rabid anti-socialist were to subject the entourage surrounding Harold Wilson to a similar 'merciless scrutiny' and argue from it that it was they who were responsible for the present inflation and unemployment, not only here but everywhere.

Those of us whose memory goes back to the first war are getting fewer and fewer, and I only write because, unless challenged, it might be thought there was some substance in Mr Storr's factious nonsense.

GAGE

Firle Place
Lewes
Sussex

No One's Protégé

Sir, Not only did Michael Foot 'secure nothing for . . . the Neil Kinnocks' (NS 23 April) in the way of government office, he did not (to the best of my knowledge) even try to get anything. Nor should he. Pillion-riding is best left to bicyclists; in politics it makes for lousy navigation and even worse steering.

NEIL KINNOCK

House of Commons

Gruesome Gremlin

Sir, We hope that you will permit us to point out the typesetting error in our copy for last week's 'Jerusalem – Islam's Noble City' advertisement. The second sentence in the introduction should have read 'The Holy City in Palestine is sacred . . .', not 'The Holy War in Palestine is sacred'.

AZIZ YAFI
Editor

Free Palestine
PO Box 492
London SW1

BOOKS & ARTS

Paul Addison

The Nine-Day Wonder

The General Strike 1926 edited by JEFFREY SKELLEY *Lawrence & Wishart* £6.00 and £2.00

The General Strike by G. A. PHILLIPS *Weidenfeld* £7.95 (to be published 6 May)

The General Strike by MARGARET MORRIS *Penguin* £1.50

The General Strike is usually approached as a chapter in working-class history, but it was among almost the finest – or at least the firmest – hours of the governing classes. On 4 May they awoke to find their authority challenged for the first time by a General Strike. Public transport was virtually at a standstill; the dockers were out, and so were the printers, together with men in the iron and steel, chemical and building trades: more than one and a half million men were on strike. Here were the makings not so much of a great smash as of a great mess. But with Baldwin as prime minister and a first-rate strike-breaking apparatus prepared, morale was high. The flood of volunteers ready to help out revealed a strong sense of class solidarity. True, there were occasional Establishment blacklegs, such as Lloyd George and the Archbishop of Canterbury, who piped up for compromise. But they were swept aside in a general determination to settle for nothing short of unconditional surrender by the TUC. After only nine days, the victory was won.

The solidarity of the middle and upper classes was all the more impressive because the coal industry, the cause of the Strike, was potentially a source of doubt and guilt, the kind of issue which could divide the conservative nation into moderates and militants. The grim conditions of work in the pits, and the Byzantine inefficiency of the colliery owners, were familiar subjects by 1920. Subsequently coal, like other basic exporting industries, sank into depression. In June 1925 the colliery owners proposed a new round of reductions in wages, and the miners, supported by the TUC, dug in their heels and resisted. The Government decided to postpone the crunch for nine months by giving a subsidy to the industry, while appointing a Royal Commission under Sir Herbert Samuel to work out a solution. In the Labour movement 'Red Friday' was hailed as a victory for industrial solidarity, but the solidarity was on the other side.

For the cabinet, the Treasury, the Bank of England and the British industrialists, the crisis in the coal industry was not an isolated problem but an element of grand strategy. John Foster, a splendidly original Marxist historian, develops this point in his essay in Jeffrey Skelley's collection. His contribution is a major attempt to explain how the collapse of Victorian prosperity obliged the directors of Great Britain Ltd to rethink

their economic and social objectives. His assumption that capitalism has always to struggle to contain the working-class enemy within the gates is not one I can share, but Mr Foster's grasp is impressive and his analysis of economic development important. In the post-war world, he argues, bankers remained extremely powerful in Britain. But while some wanted to develop domestic industry, others wanted to restore the international role which British banking had enjoyed before 1914. It was the latter who got their way, pursuing domestic inflation in order to put the pound back on the gold standard at an overvalued parity in 1925. As deflation proceeded, British exports became more expensive and pressure grew to cut wages in the basic industries. The colliery owners were therefore the shock troops of a renewed assault on wages.

Most historians differ, seeing the coal crisis as the last major incident in a slump which had worked its way through in previous years. It is reassuring to think of the colliery owners as uniquely hard-faced men among the business community. Did not Lord Birkenhead write that 'it would be possible to say without exaggeration that the miners' leaders were the stupidest men in England if we had not had frequent occasion to meet the owners'? Yet the calculations of other British industrialists contributed to the crisis, as G. W. MacDonald demonstrates in one of the supplementary studies included in Margaret Morris's Pelican original. For businessmen in the exporting industries, cheaper coal provided an attractive solution to the problem of lowering costs. In the Glasgow industrialist Lord Weir they found a spokesman who was also a personal friend of Baldwin, and could put the case to him in person.

Thus there was powerful support in the business world for a tough line over coal. But how safe politically was such a course? Would the plight of the miners not arouse powerful currents of sympathy? Here Baldwin

proved a wonderful asset to his side. Baldwin is something of a puzzle because his reputation for decency and fair play survived all the evidence to the contrary. He was in fact a fascinating compound of the tough and tender-minded, and since both sides of him were perfectly genuine, and he could register the appropriate response with the accuracy of a barometer, he never struck hard without getting his timing exactly right.

Baldwin's formidable qualities are brought out in the two excellent though somewhat contrasting books by Gordon Phillips and Margaret Morris. Ben Tillet of the TGWU said that he thought the TUC were 'fortunate in having a man like Mr Baldwin who, he supposed, was as impartial a man as could be expected considering his class'. Yet Baldwin was deceptive. The Samuel Commission gave the impression that the cabinet were conciliators, and sure enough Samuel reported in March 1926 that although the miners would have to accept wage cuts, they should be given something in return: chiefly a reorganisation of the industry to make it more profitable in the long run. By seeming to back Samuel's recommendations, Baldwin united both moderate and militant elements of the governing class behind a common front. Yet, as Miss Morris explains, Baldwin in effect prevented real negotiations in the coal industry by demanding that the miners pledge themselves in advance to accept wage cuts.

While the TUC began to plan the Strike on 29 April, the Government had been planning its reply for months, and even years. Through its Supply and Transport Committee, the cabinet had organised a network of food, coal, haulage and other committees throughout the country to keep essential services going. There was little sign of flap at the top, though Churchill, having always dreamed of living through a revolution, was hoping that fantasy would turn into fact. It does seem that he was deliberately side-tracked into the editorship of the *British Gazette* so that he could let off steam verbally. The response of the middle class to the Strike requires more analysis, though two of the essays in Miss Morris's book offer interesting leads. Stuart Mews claims that the Anglican and Free Churches showed muddled goodwill to the strikers, but selects only one or two names to buttress his case. Perhaps Canon Peter Green was more typical in commenting: 'the action of the Archbishop and the Free Church leaders was undoubtedly inspired by the Holy Spirit: and we cannot be thankful enough that Mr Baldwin ignored it.' In a piece on 'Writers and the Strike,' Adrian Mellor, Chris Pawling and Colin Sparks remind us that Galsworthy was upset by Churchill's fireworks and preferred the sobriety of Baldwin. We should also be grateful to them for encouraging us to trace the impact of the strike on D. H. Lawrence, by reading *The First Lady Chatterley*.

In recent years the history of the British working class has become a battleground between Marxist and liberal interpretations, and we can expect heavy fighting to develop in the terrain of the Twenties. For many, these were the 'days of hope' when, as James Klugmann writes, 'that great slumbering giant the British working class

Among this week's contributors:

PAUL ADDISON lectures in History at the University of Edinburgh. He is the author of *The Road to 1945*, published by Cape last autumn, and is now working on a life of Churchill.

JOHN BOSSY teaches in the Department of History, Queens University, Belfast and is the author of *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850* which was published last month.

ARTHUR HOPCRAFT's book on childhood, *The Great Apple Raid*, was published in 1970.

ELAINE FEINSTEIN is currently working on a biography of Marina Tsvetayeva.

showed something of its vast potential power'. On this analysis the defeat of the Strike was a triumph for reformism over class militancy in the ranks of labour. Mr Phillips provides a more credible account in a book which he wrongly asserts 'may not prove easily digestible'. In fact his analysis is lucid and compelling, as well as the most profoundly researched analysis of the Strike to date. He unravels one by one the intricate issues on which a general verdict must depend. Had left-wingers been gaining in strength within the TUC in the years before the Strike? No. Did the TUC want a General Strike, or believe that the miners could avoid wage cuts? No. Did the TUC call off the Strike because the spontaneity of grassroots activity threatened the control of head office organisers? No. Did the TUC, by agreeing after the Strike to enter into the celebrated Mond-Turner conversations with industrialists, turn their backs on the past? No. But it would be wrong to convey the impression that Mr Phillips's book is a series of forceful theses, for he has a well-rounded story to tell and is also shrewd in reassessing the role of personalities.

The history of the negotiations leading up to the Strike is now beyond doubt. Mr Phillips and Miss Morris, like Patrick Renshaw before them, have made full use of the cabinet, as well as the TUC records. The TUC stands revealed as a pantomime horse. The front half, the miners' leaders, wanted to struggle forward; the back half, Bevin, Thomas and the rest, tried to stand still and wait for Baldwin to intervene. But they were dragged into a strike which they at once wanted to call off. Were these divisions at the top repeated among the rank and file during the Strike? Mr Phillips cautiously recognises the degree of solidarity which emerged, but carefully qualifies the legend. Miss Morris is bolder. Where Mr Phillips contends that the Strike had to be called off because it was beginning to wither at the roots, she argues that it was blossoming magnificently and places the full onus for the end of the Strike on the union leaders. The history of the Strike up and down the country is difficult to reconstruct, and it is helpful to turn to the local studies by various writers which feature both in Miss Morris's and Mr Skelley's book. Inevitably the result is a patchwork impression, accord-

ing to trade and region. The greatest weakness of the strikers was the lack of union organisation among lorry drivers; on the other hand, buses stopped running even in Birmingham. Though it is only one element in the story, there runs through the Strike a thin red line of working-class consciousness, a phenomenon inimical to the sectional habits of trades union organisers. The strikers were not in search of power or revolution, but they hated to see the miners kicked when they were down, and this emotion alone explains why the TUC were forced into the Strike at all. No wonder there was such great anger when the Strike was called off without any tangible concessions from the Government.

Miss Morris's book is at points less searching in its questions than Mr Phillips's, but it remains a fine analysis, and perhaps because of her use of interview material, she succeeds better in capturing the social atmosphere of the period. Some details speak volumes, and we can ruminate profitably on the spectacle of the railwaymen's leader, Jimmy Thomas, warning the TUC that they ran the risk of being assassinated, on the orders of high authority, by British 'fascisti'.

Siegfried Sassoon

Three Poems on the General Strike

The New 'Black & Tans' (from White's)

*The members of White's Club have joined en bloc, and will be used
as a flying-column - Daily Mail*

Before we lorry away to smash the Workers
Let's order treble whiskeys and be solemn;
Let's pray for Tanks in Piccadilly Circus,
And Ciro's (captured by our flying-column.)
Let's thank that boulder Winston for this chance
To crack the craniums of those Cup-Tie lads
Who (though a few of them were out in France)
Are now unpatriotic curs and cads.

Then, to explain our motive for the fight,
Let's make quite certain that we never knew it.
(In times like these there's neither wrong nor right;
There's only Trouble; and we're motoring to it.)
Finally, for our future guidance, let's remember
Sidney Street, Boat-Race Night, and the Fifth of November.

For Perch and State

When Britons were as near as nothing 'rattled'
And Kipling was uncomfortably quoted
For pacifists (about to be outvoted)
And sportsmen (quite content to be embattled), --
When Muddle & Misunderstanding needed
Gumption alone to physic them away --
Lord Balfour and Lord Oxford and Lord Grey
Flapped to their pristine perches and proceeded

To say --
(Stiffening the struggle by their frigid phrases) --
What everybody knew and no one wanted . . .
'This revolutionary movement raises
The fundamental principles implanted
In our traditional liberties' . . . And, O Gawd!
Oxford coughed up 'We will not sheathe the sword'!

Strike Me Pink

Our 'National Emergency' creates careers
For those who crave some realistic recreation.
From every class (except 'the working class') one hears
How much their strenuous tasks have brought them stimulation.

Thus, while the working classes walk to work (and back),
Or take their ease on incomes vast in diminution,
Lord Goffsuit guards the gas-works and repels the attack
(By 'anarchist Trade Unions') on the Constitution.

Meanwhile I'm reading 'Winston's Daily', which contains
Ocular evidence that Someone's taking pains
To cause careers for Communists and violent persons.
And mildly I suspect (thank God, I'm not yet certain)
That Someone's far from anxious to ring down the curtain,
And Someone's chuckling 'Ha! the situation worsens.'

These three poems were found among Sassoon's papers after his death. The first two are in manuscript and dated 9 and 14 May. The third had been set up in type by the Daily Herald, but never published.

Peter Wilby

The Brightest & the Best

Teaching Styles and Pupil Progress by
NEVILLE BENNETT *Open Books* £5.75 and
£2.95

This is a bad year for progressive education. Hard on the heels of the William Tyndale affair comes this report on the teaching styles of 37 primary school teachers by a lecturer at Lancaster University. The conclusions are unequivocal: informal teachers – those who allow the pupils choice of work and seating, who favour integrating the subjects, who dislike tests, grades and homework, who favour intrinsic motivation and avoid rigid discipline – get results inferior to those achieved by the formal teachers. The formally-taught pupils do better in reading, mathematics and English comprehension. In reading age, the average advantage is from three to five months and, for some of the brightest children, the advantage is as much as nine months. There are no corresponding gains for informal teaching when creative writing is assessed. Dr Bennett concludes:

Formal teaching fulfils its aims in the academic area without detriment to the social and emotional development of pupils whereas informal teaching only partially fulfils its aims in the latter area as well as engendering comparatively poorer outcomes in academic development.

There are no discernible weaknesses in the methods and conclusions. Dr Bennett is nothing if not thorough. ('Fidgeting is significantly more prevalent in formal classrooms and in both increased fidgeting is associated with decreased achievement.') It will be impossible, in future, for anyone to write about teaching methods without some reference to this work, the first of its kind in Britain.

Some may argue that there is still inadequate perspective. Do the informally-taught children exhibit unexpected gains later in their school career? Do they show a greater capacity for self-reliance and self-education in adult life? Are they kinder to animals, better fathers and mothers, more compassionate to the underdeveloped world? Muddled aims of this sort abound in the minds of those committed to progressive teaching. Tell them that their children show no measurable gains in this or that and they will reply that *their* achievements are not susceptible to analysis by anything so crude as a measuring instrument.

But notions that schools should set out to mould human beings are both futile and dangerous. Children attend school for barely half the days in the year. The Jesuits demanded the first seven years to mould a child; parents in this country have five of them. Schools can only soften the habits and outlooks inculcated by the home and the street and it is as well that they can do no more for, if there were some foolproof method of turning out a particular type of citizen, then the future of society would be

in the hands of its schoolteachers.

The fundamental weakness of the progressive ideology is that it has attempted to control the social development of children. Significantly, the first progressive schools were founded within the British public school tradition, in an attempt to create liberal-minded vegetarians as surely as Dr Arnold of Rugby had created Christian gentlemen. The modern leftist teacher, so assiduously and indignantly mocked by the *Daily Telegraph* for his supposed endeavours to indoctrinate his pupils as revolutionaries, is simply perpetuating one of the most hallowed traditions in British education. In their common concern with character training, William Tyndale and 19th-century Rugby reflect the same educational outlook.

Most children, however, require education for the mundane purpose of acquiring skills. The most essential of these are reading, writing and numeracy. Other skills – historical knowledge and judgment, creative expression, understanding of the environment, development of critical faculties – are important, but secondary. Goodness, truth and compassion are not skills and ought to be left to parents, priests and Cliff Richard.

The great strength of the formal tradition in state education was that it recognised these limitations. The informal teachers in Dr Bennett's survey failed for an obvious reason: their children were not spending enough time on their work. They were too busy interacting socially. One informal teacher had outstanding results – in one area, her class had the best results of all. What differentiated her from the other progressives was the amount of time she spent on maths and English, 'which was equal to, or in excess of that spent by many formal classes'. The emphasis of her curriculum was 'on the cognitive rather than the affective/aesthetic'.

So Dr Bennett's research, intriguing and absorbing as it is, ends with one of those glimpses of the obvious that frequently seems invisible to educational theorists: that the more time you spend studying something, the better you will master it. (The Bullock Report on reading took 600 pages to say the same thing.) This book is not an indictment of informal approaches as teaching *methods* but a warning against them being associated with an ideology of social and moral development.

Informal methods deserve preservation in what Dr Bennett would call 'the on-going classroom situation at the teacher-pupil interface' (whoever taught Dr Bennett must have had a blind spot about creative English). They have some strengths: for example, less able boys (but not girls) do better in informal classrooms, suggesting that some of the formal teachers' impressive results are achieved at the cost of their slower pupils. But the methods must

be applied as professional techniques, not as panaceas for the shortcomings of the human race. Classrooms would benefit from a little less of the missionary spirit. No other profession conducts arguments about its methods as if they were articles of personal faith.

But, of course, this book is already being greeted as a triumph and a vindication for the Black Paper lobby, as if it had won a semi-final, if not a Cup Final. There will be others, too, to claim victories for their pet theories. Dr Bennett has some evidence that children with varying personalities flourish best under different teaching methods. No doubt prophets will be heard in the land advocating streaming by personality ('Silence, 4 Intraverted'). Dealing with 30 children at once is, of its nature, such a difficult, intractable and nerve-jarring process, that teachers are probably doomed to search for ever for their golden fleece.

John Bossy

Holy Disorders

Bare Ruined Choirs by DAVID KNOWLES
Cambridge £6.50

David Knowles's four volumes on the religious orders in medieval England constitute one of the undoubted masterpieces of English historical scholarship; they are also a complex expression of his own experience as a monk, a classical scholar and an Englishman. They took him 30 years to write. When he began them in 1929 he was teaching, not very contentedly, at Downside; when he finished he was Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge. *Bare Ruined Choirs* is the last thing he did before he died 18 months ago, a re-edition of that part of his final volume which deals directly with the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII. It leaves out the critical apparatus and a number of the earlier and later chapters; it adds a perfectly stunning collection of illustrations of monastic ruins and their sites. Altogether it is a feast of verbal and visual riches, and though it may be slightly over-rich for some tastes, anyone who does not have the complete version should go out and get it. Even those who do will find that it repays a look, because although there are very few changes in the text the effect of the illustrations, and of some of the omissions, is to give the new version a rather different balance from the old one. The main reason for this is that, as Knowles was very well aware, the ruins have proved so much more powerful a testimony to what monasticism stood for than one can envisage the communities being which, but for the dissolution, would have continued to reside within them:

The grey walls and broken cloisters . . . speak more eloquently for the past than any historian would dare, and pose for every beholder questions that words cannot answer.

Knowles certainly wanted to write the

history of an intensely controverted subject with that 'absolute intellectual chastity' whose absence he diagnosed in Gasquet and others, and which anyone who heard him lecture will know that he possessed. But he also wanted to make a personal, and extremely traditional, statement about the monastic life as a witness to the transcendence of the God of Christians, and about the conditions (in his view, stringent) in which that witness could be a true one. The bare, ruined choirs speak more clearly for the monastic ideal he wished to affirm than for most of the monastic facts he had to record. They add something to a tension which is already evident in the text. On one side we have his judgment about whether the monks deserved their fate:

There was a number of houses which no ... sovereign would have dreamed of destroying unless he was prepared to deny the right of existence to any monastic house ... There was a larger number of houses whose continued existence served no good purpose whatever.

Then there were the rest:

None of them was fervent, but many were harmless and, at least to a good-natured observer from outside, respectable enough to pass muster; a tolerant man of the world would have allowed them to continue, a severe spiritual reformer would have found them wanting.

Given substance by his famous portraits of William More, gentleman-prior of Worcester, and, on the credit side, of John Houghton, prior of the London Charterhouse, executed in May 1535 for refusing to acknowledge the royal supremacy, this was a deeply pondered and quite conclusive judgment, a classic instance of intellectual chastity.

On the other side we have his stinging and relentless arraignment of the community which brought about or permitted the dissolution. For Knowles, early Tudor England was a 'grasping and acquisitive society which had as its characteristic quality a keen appreciation of the main chance', suspended in an emotional and moral hiatus when the medieval feeling for holiness, compassion and chivalry had gone and the Renaissance respect for culture and civilised behaviour had not yet arrived. At the end of a ferocious page about the reign of Henry VIII, he wrote:

It is difficult to think of an age in which unselfishness, devotion to an ideal, faithfulness to a master or friend were rarer in public life, or one in which lust for material gain was greater.

I am sure there is an element of real historical vision in this; it is not an explosion of simple spleen, and in the context of the original volume, where there is much less dramatic stuff to balance it, it acts as a structural column of great strength. But exposed as it is here, lacking some of its historical buttresses (like the fine chapter on Erasmus, which it seems a pity to have left out), reinforced with these extraordinarily moving evocations of desolate sites and by two particularly nasty-looking portraits of Henry VIII and Cromwell, it does seem a bit much. Even, perhaps, a little lacking in chastity. It is dangerous to tinker with a masterpiece, even when the tinkering is done as beautifully as here.

Arthur Hopcraft

On the Bosses

Another World, 1897-1917 by ANTHONY EDEN
Allen Lane £3.95

The Edens had a butler whose name was House - 'called Harris by my father as being a less confusing name'. Whatever functions the 'faithful retainers' of the day performed, puzzling the gentry was certainly not on the list. House/Harris was

young for the job, but equable, quick and popular. Having graduated as my father's valet, he was a useful guide in any household dilemma. Very severely wounded in the war, House became a cripple for life, but he never bemoaned his fate or lost interest in events. Like all who served my father, he loved to speak of him.

Anthony Eden's account of his first 20 years is generous with kindly testimonials of this sort. Smitton, the head-keeper, was 'slow but firm of speech ... a master of his craft, he would without difficulty awe a bold poacher or a restless guest'. Hall, the blacksmith, was 'solid and friendly'. Woolger, a valet, could 'gauge any mood'. Miss Broomhead, governess, proved 'firm not only with us but on our behalf'. Much of the book reads like a collective reference for the

vanished English servant-class. They were 'essential ingredients' in the ordering of the author's charmed, young life, and in his memory of them and of the relationship between rural wealth and labour Eden reconstructs an existence which may well be called Another World.

Home was Windlestone, 'a classic rectangle of sandstone', which rose grandly out of acres and acres of County Durham farmland, where the diligent tenants enjoyed, apparently, the most benign of little autocracies. Anthony's father, Sir William, saw to it that cottage roofs did not leak and had 'every door and window repainted a deep shade of blue every two or three years'. Anthony's mother, Sybil, trotted off in pony-and-carriage 'to near or distant parts of the estate', succouring the sick and aged with food and money. She raised funds to build a hospital at Bishop Auckland. The couple's silver wedding anniversary coincided with the coming-of-age of Anthony's eldest brother, Jack, and the party lasted three days: friends and neighbours on the first, tenants second, estate workers third. At Christmas there were amateur dramatics in the East Hall.

The upbringing fits one's retained image of Anthony Eden so aptly he might have invented it to avoid public disappointment. There always seemed, in the man's person, demeanour, *sound*, a sense of responsibility to the lower orders that was entirely different from Churchill's man-of-destiny style, or Macmillan's promise of double-your-money, or any other stance adopted by

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Eden's contemporary politicians. The English love a gentleman – or, at any rate, used to – even if they haven't all been so keen on a lord; and Anthony met requirements in that direction to the point beyond caricature. The Tory party sought to repeat the species with Alec Douglas-Home; but the looks were not there. And since then . . . Well, sailor Heath is more like a gentleman's gentleman, and Mrs Thatcher nobody's man. Eden defined the Conservative Party for my mother as the kind of man she would most like to be her children's employer – a daunting, unanswerable political argument, which still failed to dissuade my father from voting Labour for the first time in his life in 1945; he'd gone off employers.

I thought of him a lot while reading this book, because the best of it describes trench fighting during the first world war and Eden's recollections have so much of the same reticent, regretful and deeply affecting tone I remember from my father on the few occasions he would answer questions about it. There was not much else these two men had in common: old Etonian Prime Minister and co-chairman of Great Wyrley Darby and Joan Club. They were born in the same decade and survived the same war, and it gave them the shared language of another world which defies belief. Eden writes of the Somme:

The stench, the mud, the corpses, the destruction everywhere, the torn and twisted guns, the shattered wagons, the mutilated horses and mules . . . At about this time a circular order arrived from higher authority, it could have been corps or even army, on the subject of shell-shock. It warned against the increasing spread of this symptom and indicated that it could not be accepted for treatment as were wounds suffered in action.

Eden's writing about the trenches does not, of course, have the bite, vividness or sheer substance of, say, Robert Graves's *Goodbye To All That*. This book is not a classic. It is the work of an old man writing

about a young one, sometimes suggesting veiled memory and a deliberate discretion where uninhibited candour might be too painful. There are no cowards, no fools, no villains, not even of a moment. But it rings true in what it chooses to recall. It's surprising to find oneself using the word 'modest' about Anthony Eden. He was a brigade major at 20.

C. H. Rolph

Turn Again

Turning Points by LORD WOLFENDEN Bodley
Head £4.00

Unlike (I notice) a number of distinguished reviewers, I thoroughly enjoyed this autobiography. This may be because I know the man who wrote it, can hear his voice telling its story, and realise that it would be told with many a suppressed chuckle. But on paper, their suppression has been pretty ruthless. It's very tautly written throughout, rather like lecture notes with an occasional throwaway promise of wit ('but of course you know that one'). Each chapter, and especially the one about his directorship of the British Museum, is like a highly literate house magazine or company history, with head-pats for everyone from the telephone girls and the carpenter to the uniformed men on the gates. But I suddenly discovered that the whole thing could seem unexpectedly funny if you imagined that every common noun was printed with an initial capital letter; and that's the way I recommend the reading of it.

I suppose one would have liked more about his early childhood: I'm astounded that his memory doesn't begin until the age of four. And I wanted to know more about those Methodist parents, the Wakefield Grammar School, and why so friendly a man had so few friends as a boy. He comes, he says, of 'taciturn Yorkshire folk, not given to expressing their feelings', which must account for the fact that the only feelings expressed are the traditional ones with which our more brilliant public men deprecatingly report their various public appointments and successes. Even here his touch is astringently agreeable – 'It has now become standard practice that any government formed in this country has to include a former pupil of mine who got a Third in Modern Greats' – though it is probably characteristic that he should have qualified at school for the one and only quiet place in the most exhausting game ever invented: goalkeeper at water-polo. Is there here, I wonder, a clue to his career in the fact that this involves (I speak from experience) a constant state of anxious alertness while treading water?

The 'turning points' of the title are also the chapter headings – Oxford, Princeton, Uppingham, Shrewsbury, Reading University, the Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution, the University Grants Committee, the British Museum. The dis-

tance between them all seems exactly the same, each new direction is taken up with a slight start of surprise, each job tackled with curiosity, efficiency and a determination that it's not going to last too long. I don't quite believe in his surprise about the chairmanship of the homosexuality inquiry. He was a pretty obvious choice. The whole subject was much in the air, the British public was convulsed in one of its sickening bouts of obscene morality, and into the melee he had dropped, like a great blob of commonsense, an invited article in the *Sunday Times*, a superbly reasonable voice from the world of education. Anyway if he was surprised at the appointment, a great many people weren't. But I do wish he had unbent a little more about CHOP (I never knew anyone called it that), for there is certainly much he could tell. I've always understood that, unusually in a departmental committee chairman, he wrote the report himself; and here surely is proof in the number of times and contexts in which he uses the phrase 'not our business', 'not my business', 'not the school's business', and so on. For the most famous phrase in the Wolfenden Report is the one in which it suggests that, apart from the protection of children and the preservation of public decency, homosexuality is 'not the law's business'.

Among the glimpses of what *ought* to be obvious but would certainly never occur to me is that when a certain professional class – dentists, for example – gets a rise in pay, there is a sharp rise in the number of dentists' children whose names are put down for schools like Uppingham and Shrewsbury. And there are nice little memories of Oxford and other academics, buried away in a good deal of DNB language, like the story about the Dean of Divinity at Magdalen, Dr Adam Fox – 'one of the bravest things I ever did was to teach him to drive a car: he had an unnerving faith in the efficacy of prayer'. I think that particular use of the word 'unnerving' tells you a lot about Lord Wolfenden.

Geoffrey Grigson

Biology of Grief

Can I beat myself now for that
Grief? Evergreens do know their
Fall of leaf. In the end griefs

Are complete. Griefs take at first
To hiding away in the cupboard
Where photos of you and me

Fade, I walking under a black
Head of hair, you sweetly breasted
And slim; where – you removed them –

Are stored no photos of her; where –
I turned them out too – are no
Photos of him. We are older. Have

Changed. He and she – and you
Can't remember his name – in
Features and age stay the same.

TUESDAY 4 MAY 1926

Between 1½ and 2 million
workers were on strike, and a
million miners remained
locked out of the pits.



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Elaine Feinstein

Lost and Found

Post-War Russian Poetry edited by Daniel Weissbord Penguin 60p

The War is Over by EVGENY VINOKUROV translated by Anthony Rudolf and Daniel Weissbord Carcanet £2.00

It is still a publishing hazard that paperbacks are thought of as books which have already appeared in another form; and Penguin must feel particularly galled when an original and useful collection such as *Post-War Russian Poetry* goes without notice for a year. I can't think of another anthology that offers a comparable range of contemporary Russian poetry. The brilliant émigrés, like Brodsky, are here, and the martyred dissidents, like Gorbanevskaya; but so too are those writers whose names remain almost unknown in the West while Russians think of them as their most talented young poets. Here too are the older writers who belong to the great generation for the most part either silent or silenced: precarious, honest men such as Slutsky and Martynov, who loved and mourned and always honoured poetry.

There is a passage in Yevtushenko's *Preocious Autobiography* where he talks about his own early impatience to see his poems in print, and recalls how Boris Slutsky listened to his complaints and took him quietly over to his own drawers, which were evidently stuffed with sheaves of poems, unpublished and, at that time, unpublishable. With Martynov, Slutsky preserves some of the verve and impudence of the days before the Terror. Both are represented. Here too is Tvardovsky, the courageous poet who edited *Novy Mir* in the extraordinary days that saw the publication of *Ivan Denisovich*, Pasternak's recollections, and a few Tsvetayeva poems; and Yevgeny Vinokurov, of whom more presently. (Yevtushenko was quite wrong to say last December in the *Guardian* that neither Tvardovsky nor Vinokurov had an English translator; his mistake, however, was entirely reasonable.) Tvardovsky is represented here by a witty extract from his 'Tyorkin in the Other-world', in which a soldier recognises Hell, not so much by the hot parched taste in his mouth – he is used to discomfort – but by the unnatural order: 'not a fag-end in sight.'

Of the oldest generation to survive the war, Akhmatova is represented here most finely; there are some new translations of the magnificent, late 'Northern Elegies', verses full of the ghosts of St Petersburg, and familiar Blok poems; all smelling of birch trees and mushrooms and burnt notebooks. (Pasternak is represented by an altogether more familiar group of verses.) But what struck me most, looking at this collection, was how the greatness of Marina Tsvetayeva, in spite of the tragedy of her long homesickness, her doomed homecoming and her death in 1941, now dominates the imagination of so many of Russia's

most talented poets. The ferocity of her own extraordinary personal utterance is transmuted into intimate lyrics, or explosions of defiance, in the voice of Bella Akhmadulina; or else becomes a witty, disciplined meditation in the voice of Brodsky. (Both poets acknowledge her influence.)

Probably Bella Akhmadulina's inheritance of the reputation of the foremost among the younger women poets is deserved; but it should be said that Yunna Moritz is arguably as talented, though she has not yet been translated into English. Her words seethe with the sensual world of Nature, like rich fruit fermenting; yet she can work in a quieter way, more like Pasternak, in a poem about (say) bleak weather over a northern bay. There are at least nine translators, apart from the editor himself, at work in this volume; and the best tribute I can pay them is to point out how easy it is to sense the richness and diversity of the original Russian poets, rather than praising individual translators.

Vinokurov has been translated for the Carcanet edition by Anthony Rudolf and Daniel Weissbord, not in collaboration but as individual poets picking the poems they preferred. Without the appendix, I am not sure I could have told which hand was on which poem. Their success is quiet; but then Vinokurov is a quiet poet. Many of his best poems are sad, personal memories of the second world war. Rather as Pilinsky is quoted as saying, Vinokurov takes for his motto: 'Write only what you cannot not write.' He avoids the flamboyance which has made Vozhneshensky and Yevtushenko so acceptable to the West – though it should be remembered that in Russia the same wave brought all three to prominence at roughly the same period. As poetry editor of *Novy Mir* he did much to advance the reputations of Slutsky and Zabolotsky, and to establish that of Akhmadulina.

He can be lighthearted. In 'Poetry Editor' he catches beautifully the growing suspicion invading him that everyone in Russia is secretly writing poetry:

In they pour. They all write poetry.
The whole world does.
I lost faith in people.
I became suspicious:
What was the Director doing
When he locked himself
In his office?

At his most serious the objects he chooses are more eloquent than his metaphors: snow on a charred corpse, a gutted cellar, a blind man's remembered blueness of eye.

Vinokurov is coming to England this month, and will be reading at the Poetry Society in Earl's Court Square on 30 April. I have not heard him read; but I imagine him to be in another tradition from either Yevtushenko or Vozhneshensky; as indeed his poetry is, being sober, modest and as far as possible naked of rhetoric. What he shares with those two is only freshness of personal response, and a sense of responsibility for saying what could be said when it was possible; which is no doubt why he came to the fore in Russia in the same years that they did. 'Freshness of personal response' has not always been a term of praise in the USSR.

Julian Barnes

Silly!

A Memorial Service by J. I. M. STEWART
Gollancz £3.95

The Gardens of the Casino by STUART EVANS
Hutchinson £4.25

Hot to Trot by JOHN LAHR *Eyre Methuen*
£3.75

Found, Lost, Found by J. B. PRIESTLEY
Heinemann £2.90

The Happy Dream by J. B. PRIESTLEY
Whittington Press £45.00 and £12.00

The November Man by BRIAN FREEMANTLE
Cape £2.95

Tucking into a J. I. M. Stewart – *A Memorial Service* being the middle volume of his quintet *A Staircase in Surrey* – has pleasures analogous to those of the high-table dinners he so regularly describes. The civility with which one is treated, the reappearance of familiar faces (Duncan Pattullo has now, in middle life, been made a Fellow), the conclusion that the fun has been excellently staged, all make such a nice change from grubby reality. This time the SCR intrigues concern a fractious upper-class undergraduate who may or may not be sent down, a diffident lower-class undergraduate who may or may not be admitted, and the

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problem of the missing Blunderville papers, stolen by a don some 25 years ago. Perhaps it is the unifying element of Mr Stewart's heightened, donnish style which ensures our willing belief in the importance of such questions. At one point Patullo, who is a playwright, notes of the poor scholar, who has little gift for words, that 'in the Olympic pool of language . . . he had shown no sign of being more than a breast-stroke performer as yet'. Mr Stewart, by contrast, glides through Parsons' Pleasure using the elegant, forgotten single overarm. Things conduce and preclude, lovers inarm one another, undergraduates leave the spreading curtilage of the college for Cathay; instead of the rowdy piss-up of your town novels, there are 'ebullitions of vinous jollity'. Irony is indicated by the civil negative, which sometimes leads to tonguing problems: 'What I have to record of this behaviour is its not noticeably striking me as an abnegation of the customary amenities of social intercourse.' You shake yourself from a delightful drowse and vulgarly translate into: 'it was odd he didn't think it rude.'

Stuart Evans's second novel shows an intelligent and smartly allusive writer sadly adrift in mid-Channel. At its centre are a group of artists, writers, *penseurs* and beautiful women, lolling about in France, on whom the narrative shyly declines to focus; instead, it scurries round them, backtracks, double-takes, offers alternatives, discusses and admires itself. But then this isn't, Mr Evans affirms, just one of those 'necessary stories' of the sort that cater for 'the innocent and largely inattentive audience'. Conversations occur which can only gradually, if at all, be assigned to particular speakers; passages of reported thought sometimes reveal the thinker, sometimes not. It isn't the difficulty of this technique that one objects to so much as its emptiness when used exhaustively. The other main character in the novel is a beautiful girl who sits in the casino gardens every afternoon (the importance of the casino? – well, 'life is a randomly stopping wheel, a flip of a card, a complex fruit-machine with an impossible pay-line'). She recurs every few pages, and each time we are offered a 'projection' of who or what she might be: whore, neglected wife, phantom, etc. You don't, of course, find out (silly!); indeed, you may even become unintrigued.

Neither longueurs nor bafflement in John Lahr, a straightforward, not to say relentless, humorist. If you have any doubts, turn to the back flap of *Hot to Trot*, and there he is in a full-throttle Esther Rantzen, his 12-bore nostrils making an offer you can't refuse. He's obviously just read his own novel and can't get over how slick, how fly, how goddam sassily clever it all is. It's a triple-intercut job, the main strand showing George Melish, hot-shot TV casting director and superstud, trying to get his wife back from her rock-star lover. Woven in are memories of the recent past (initiatory sex with his wife and other women) and the distant past (meat-beating in his Jewish home and droll sexual competitions with a schoolfriend). The short, formula-written sections of roughly a page – a pun, a snatch of an old song, a song of an old snatch, a tough bit of slang – are as light and bright as a stack of 45s. The best parts show spry

and edgy recall of the absurdity of adolescence ('by firelight, the Clearasil patches were completely hidden on her face. She looked beautiful'); though nostalgia overlaid with cynicism doesn't always turn out quite so naturalistic. High praise for the book's production – a direct import from Knopf: embossed cloth, rough-cut edges, clean print, white paper, not to mention margins.

J. B. Priestley's comic mode is more that of trundling bonhomie. *Found, Lost, Found* is a pursuit-type love story about a civil servant driven to drink by his job and the English way of life; the latter consists of whacky aunts, surly unionists and fat-headed theatre directors. I spent most of the time in a state of semi-criinge, waiting for the avuncular advice to flow; but apart from being told to put more heart and imagination into one's sex-life, one gets off pretty lightly for once. The other Priestley off-cut, *The Happy Dream*, is an appendix to his thoughts on Time and Dreams, and comes in two prices, nightmarish (34p a

page), and simply visionary (£1.29 a page). A warming account of the dream, which 'towered above and outshone all the recent events of my old age' precedes various possible interpretations (was it, for instance, an image of heaven?). The dream itself has Mr Priestley, his wise mind intact in a rejuvenated body, slogging uphill behind a shapely girl towards a castle he never reaches. One interpretation not advanced is a Freudian one. Finally to Brian Freemantle, whose years in Eastern Europe have produced a lot of acute corroborating detail in his pacy and peripatetic thrillers. Here, for instance, in Prague, he notes the Czech man in the street's habit of just happening to spit whenever passing the Aeroflot offices. Détente, grain deals, and the Presidential elections form the background of *The November Man*; an unstable British businessman and a gnomish double agent squirm between the nutcrackers. Everything ends like today's headlines: the Russians get what they want; the Americans make do with what they get; we lose.

Frank Norman

Colin MacInnes 1914-1976

I first met Colin MacInnes in the early hours of the morning in a Notting Hill Gate all-night café. The clientele was almost exclusively black. It was 1958, *Encounter* had just published a sizeable extract from my prison memoir, *Bang to Rights*, and I had not yet got used to being approached by complete strangers.

'You are Frank Norman, aren't you?' he asked. To which I replied truculently: 'What's that got to do with you?' He loved that kind of response. He then told me how much he had admired the piece in *Encounter* and said that it was unique and that I would never write anything like it again. He was right.

In the early days our relationship was friendly and rewarding – but he was a secretive and mysterious man and difficult to get close to. He offered moral support when he felt that I needed it and lectured me hotly when that was the last thing I was in the mood for. In recent years it was pretty nearly impossible for us to meet without even the most mundane topic of conversation developing into a blazing row within ten minutes.

But I will never forget and will always be grateful for his many kindnesses. He was the staunchest of supporters of my early books, but highly and perhaps rightly critical of my swollen head after the West End success of *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be*.

'The trouble with you,' he once flung at me over a drink in Muriel Belcher's club, 'is that you never stop talking about yourself!' 'If that's all you think of me,' I came back at him, 'I'm going to the French pub.'

'There you go talking about yourself again,' he snorted. More than once we almost came to blows.

The unqualified disaster of my second

play, *A Kayf Up West*, in 1964 brought with it a massive bill from the taxman (for royalties earned from *Fings*) that I could not begin to meet. Heavy spending had taken its toll on my bank account. I came close to bankruptcy. Colin had just returned from an American lecture tour and for the first and only time in all the years that I knew him he was flush. Shortly after my play had been thoroughly roasted by the critics he sidled up to me one lunch time in the French pub and tucked ten, unasked for, ten-pound notes into the top pocket of my jacket.

'Just a little present,' he said. 'Don't hate me.' Before I could utter a word he fled and I didn't see him again for weeks.

All telephone calls from Colin were *alarm* calls whatever the time of day or night . . . His flat had been burgled again. A young Negro had dumped his blonde, sluttish wife and two kids at his flat: 'Only for one night,' the man had promised but they'd been there a week and he had disappeared. 'How can I get rid of them without handing them over to the authorities? – He'll make a lot of trouble if I do that.'

I once tried to pump him about his fascination with Negroes. 'They'll steal your typewriter,' he chuckled, 'but they never steal the manuscript.' Further he would not be drawn.

I will miss his infrequent and often unheralded appearances on my doorstep – even if my face did slump at the sight of him standing there looking ill and gaunt and the news never being good. Colin was an incurable romantic, but a 'real writer' with a tough mind and tender heart.

Have I written a tribute to Colin or am I talking about myself again? Perhaps just this once he will forgive me.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Horse Sense

Equus Albery

Twelfth Night St George's

Waiting for Godot Royal Court

Somewhere in *Sleuth* Anthony Shaffer tells us, with that strange pomposity that tends to afflict both himself and his brother when the mental going gets heavy, that 'the detective story is the normal recreation of snobbish, outdated, life-hating, ignoble minds'. I wonder what his speaker would make of Peter Shaffer's *Equus*, which is a sort of psychiatric whodunnit, a case-study unravelled with the tantalising skill of a Margery Allingham or John Dickson Carr. The play involves, and by now famously involves, young Alan Strang, who has blinded six horses: piece by piece the multifarious causes of his psychosis are unmasked by an NHS Poirot called Martin Dysart. When the boy looked into those big, brown eyes, he saw an authoritarian God, a bossy father with feet of clay, a suffering Christ, a religiose mother, his own powerful but untried sexuality, his inadequacy and the mockery of the world, his domestic captivity and, at the same time, a vivid symbol of freedom. All that, and I dare say more. In fact, Dysart sleuths so many contradictory meanings and metaphors out of one animal that I found myself hankering nostalgically for the awful literal-mindedness of Mr Gradgrind's clockwork pupils in *Hard Times*: 'Horse. Quadruped. Gramnivorous. Forty teeth, namely 24 grinders, four eye-teeth, and 12 incisive . . .'

Yet as a clinical package, this seems to me too neatly put together, too easily untied. Even as detective drama it is a bit glib and, though it would be presumptuous to call its admirers 'life-hating' or 'ignoble', I suspect that it is partly aimed at something not altogether noble in them. It appeals to a morbid fascination with pathological exposure, a taste for prodding at peculiar symptoms and digging out furtive secrets. What did Alan *do* after he saw his dad in the cinema, gawping at a skin-flick? Did or didn't he have sex with the stable-girl, there, in front of the horses? Mr Shaffer dangles such questions for us to snap at, and it is perhaps a little surprising of him to do so, since one of his objects in *Equus* is to criticise those who officiously prod at peculiar symptoms, dig out furtive secrets, and so on.

He extracts all the tension and drama he possibly can from his psychiatrist – and then attacks psychiatry. He holds our interest by showing us an emotional vivisectionist at his sticky-fingered work – and then, with what you may think odd logic, expects us to condemn the practice of vivisection. It's a paradox that put me in mind of *Sleuth*, in which brother Anthony successfully thrilled and chilled us, only to come up with the sanctimonious denuncia-

tion of thrillers and chillers I've just quoted. Consistency does not seem to be one of the Shaffer family virtues.

All this might not matter very much, if the play's critique of psychiatry were cutting and commanding. But the programme's ritual homage to R. D. Laing, so often raided and reduced by lesser writers, should put us on our guard. Alan, it seems, knew ecstasy with his horses, and therefore to 'cure' his obsession with them is to diminish him spiritually: 'can you think of anything worse one can do to anyone than take away their worship?' asks Dysart, himself a closet pagan with a deep mistrust of 'normality'.

And in fact the answers to his question are (a) that, yes, we *can* think of worse things; (b) that cures are usually harder to achieve than he or his author thinks; (c) that normality is not very fairly represented by Dysart's wife, a Scottish lady dentist never seen in the play, but recurrently invoked as the prototype of 'clear, red-headed, inaccessible briskness'; (d) that Dysart, and Shaffer, are confusing fixation with worship, sickness with soul, and perhaps also agony with ecstasy. Horses aren't horses to Alan. They are emotions gone awry, misplaced problems, adolescent muddle on four legs. They are, mainly, anxieties and fears; and if you find a very unhappy young man worshipping his anxieties and fears, it seems more reasonable to relieve him of his worship than to fall on your knees beside him. Dysart should not blame himself, nor Shaffer apologise for him.

But perhaps I'm over-reacting to the inflated reputation of a piece that seems to have won everything except the Queen's Award for exports. There's obviously good to be said of it. It is generous to characters whom cruder writers might have caricatured, for instance Alan's mum, who gets an eloquent and moving speech of self-justification. It is fair-minded enough to bring on a lady magistrate to remind Dysart, though with insufficient force, that Alan is actually in pain. Few movies could match its deft flow of time and place, and few directors the dazzling simplicity of John Dexter's staging. It is well acted, notably by Colin Blakely, whose troglodyte shrink is tougher and grittier than Alec McCowen's flustered original, without being any the less ironical about his own imperfections. It's easier to believe he could dominate and direct a troubled boy, though this may be partly because Gerry Sundquist's Alan is more querulous and malleable than that of Peter Firth.

Their encounters are the centre of the play, and also the best of it, since Peter Shaffer is, and has always been, strongest when he presents us with personal conflict and weakest when he's dealing with impersonal

ideas. But this time the ideas strike me as quite exceptionally suspect, and sentimental too. Maybe John George Haig found ecstasy with baths and acid, or Jack the Ripper worshipped prostitutes when he wasn't butchering them: should we idealise their feelings? If not, we should be pretty wary of the thinking behind *Equus*.

St George's was a 19th-century church in Tufnell Park Road, and St George is George Murcell, the hero who has converted it into a theatre. With its dome, gothic arches and thrust stage, it's certainly very pleasant, but it will be more Elizabethan, more exciting and less acoustically soggy when, *if*, balconies are built above its ground-floor pews. The aim is to present Shakespeare and not any director's 'improvement' of him, something I've often advocated in these columns. But unbiased production need not mean dull production, and I have to add that Frank Hauser could have found more psychological depth, more subtlety and resonance in *Twelfth Night*.

Eric Porter, with his etched, creased countenance, certainly looks like the severe puritan Malvolio is supposed to be, and yet he gives a soft-centred performance, complete with dimples and off-cue smiles. How can we laugh at his gulling when there's so little pomposity in him, or applaud it when he's so sympathetic? Much the same can be said of William Squire's Belch, who enters with a sour look on his flushed, saloon-bar face, yet quite fails to exploit it. At the end, he's supposed to round on Aguecheek, revealing himself as the leech and predator he really is: Mr Squire simply drapes an amiable, drunken arm over his victim's shoulder and tells him he's 'an asshead, a knave, a thin-faced knave' in the most serene and beatific voice imaginable, quite muffing the point.

If Mr Murcell had taken respect for the bard to its ultimate point, and imported Shakespeare from purgatory to direct the play himself, one hopes he would have come up with a richer, stronger production. Certainly, Samuel Beckett has done much for his own *Waiting for Godot*. It would be dishonest of me to make big claims for this revival, because it is performed by the Schiller Theatre of Berlin in a hunnish language, strange to me. But I've never seen a more finely disciplined – one might even say choreographed – production of the play.

The two tramps sometimes actually move in unison, as if to remind us of their symbiotic dependence on each other; but these balletic effects do not exclude individual characterisation. Horst Bollman makes a podgy, earthy, bustling Estragon, and Stefan Wigger a long, vague, rather ethereal Vladimir, a white-faced acolyte agog to meet his god, or Godot. It all occurs on the starkest stage, under the barest sky, and before the bleakest, most spidery tree the original stage directions will allow: a setting that reinforces the general grimness. Did I miss the humour I've previously found in the play because it was in German? Or is it, as I suspect, Beckett's policy to exclude what laughter he can? But we'll have to wait until the Court does his latest plays, *That Time* and *Footfalls*, to discover what depths his pessimism is presently plumbing.

Television

Dennis Potter

Stench Warfare

Any cracker-barrel philosopher with a film crew and a million dollars will tell you that life has many unexpected consolations and not a few posthumous rewards. Little did those unpaid and overworked Jews back in the concentration camps realise, for instance, that one day the stinking remains of their emaciated bodies would take almost as much as two minutes of screen time in *QB VII*, 'a spectacular feature film of the best-selling novel' made for American television. True, they didn't get much of a billing, being mostly unknown, but there they were, conveniently piled on top of each other in a deep trench, right in the middle of the big-time along with some of the biggest stars in the business. The hero of the film is a disgruntled writer who visits a memorial to the victims of the Nazi camps, and we see him watching a few grainy spools of old newsreel. A moment of truth.

The colour cameras zoom in, therefore, to show the plentiful glycerine tears the make-up girl has made to course down his cheeks. 'I know what I have to write about now,' he chokes, turning away from the grey and juddering celluloid, the match-stick corpses and gorged ovens. His expensive mistress looks at him with what are called pained eyes and grips his arm tenderly, just to show that she understands. And some violins start to sob in Yiddish.

Some measure of the crass offensiveness of *QB VII* might possibly be gained by imagining the dear folk back in Peyton Place washing themselves in soap rendered down from human fat, or lighting up their banal adulteries with lampshades made out of human skin. 'Old agonies are relived, ancient wounds reopened,' promised the *Radio Times* in announcing the five hours of film, the 141 locations and dozen or so stars which allowed *QB VII* to sprawl across Saturday and Sunday evening on BBC-1. The style of the drama would have been even better served with one of those old-time Hollywood posters, in scarlet letters four feet high dripping with exclamation marks: OLD AGONIES RELIVED! ANCIENT WOUNDS REOPENED!! We could then have set our faces accordingly.

The film takes its title from the abbreviation for Queen's Bench Seven, the Old Bailey courtroom in which the writer is sued for libel by a Polish-born doctor he has accused of collaborating in castrations performed on Jews in one of the concentration camps. A story that obviously has its source in a similar but actual libel action in which the real author, Leon Uris, was concerned, and where the arcane formalities of a British trial offered strange means of access to the nightmare of the camps and the unassuageable need to tell of it in the language of justice and meaningful

retribution. In the film, too, the procedure in the courtroom and the structure it imposed for a while upon the dialogue was far and away the most decent and successful element in all the five hours of location-hopping. But long before we reached the wigs and gowns and bobbing barristers of a familiar dramatic device, the damage had been done.

Damage, or insult, or obscenity, which lay in treating the holocaust in language, setting, characterisation, and even casting that more appropriately belongs to drivelling little jet-set liaisons or soap opera pieties which normally separate one block of screaming ads from another. Even the mediocre device of a sudden close-up screen right every eight minutes or so, owes its form to this almost mandatory style of jolting the viewer out of any likely slumber so that the commercials can zip out in front of unlidged eyeballs. But when they showed the concentration camp scenes in the film, what ad did they use to follow the pile of corpses? I ask the question because the dialogue that oozed round these terrible pictures was all of a piece with the standard yuk in which such buy-now exhortations are usually embedded. It is a question, however, which only someone like the late Lenny Bruce would even think of daring to answer.

For much of the time – so uneconomical was the sprawl of 'the longest film ever made for TV' – we could have been watching any other weekend movie in which supposedly attractive people make dents in the pillow or growl about the hidden meaning

of life across their whisky glasses. But sooner or later, with a warning from the music, the mundane exchanges bumped back to the central obscenities of the camps and turned the pap into something that has the nastiest stench of all.

I do not know how accurate a dramatisation this was of the original 'best-selling novel' (again, a mandatory phrase), but even if the book was as bad as the script I am still not, of course, accusing Leon Uris of insincerity or cynicism in using the concentration camps as the source of energy and shock in his writings. The criticism is solely a question of achievement, not motive, of ability and not design. It may very well be that no professional writer is able to roll a clean sheet of paper into his typewriter and tap out a fiction about the Nazi death camps. Perhaps there is no ordered sensibility which can, in the service of drama or the novel, shape a balanced sentence, place a comma, dot an *i*, cross a *t* and trim down a subordinate clause into some deliberate cadence designed to examine the experience of the abused and murdered Jews. But what is absolutely certain is that anyone who attempts such a thing, no matter how strong the compulsion or how fervent his thirst for righteousness or how open in the heart he may be to the screams of the tortured, cannot with decency carry out the task with the conventions and the very insipidities of machine-made fiction, however well it sells. It is surely not possible to imagine an everyday story of genocide, let alone write one.

Films

John Coleman

Just Polishing It

All the President's Men Warner West End 2
The Count of Monte Cristo Dominion
Shivers Classics, Piccadilly and Victoria

Watergate is history, American and recent, but already history. First question: if one asked the average British person in the street, as opposed to the Street, what was Watergate, might one not get a dusty answer? Second question: aren't there real dangers in tampering, however judiciously, with the known facts (insofar as these were deployed by the two *Washington Post* reporters, Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, in the extraordinary account of their delvings, *All the President's Men*) which were to lead to Nixon's disgrace and resignation? And other questions take their places in the queue. Wasn't that racy, yet scrupulous and detailed book a shade showbiz already in its procedures and characterisations? Anthony Howard, with three years in the *Post's* newsroom under his belt, certainly thought so when he reviewed it for the *NS* (28 June 1974). And aren't the risks of both simplification and inflation increased when an \$8.5 million movie needs such stars as Dustin Hoffman to play Bernstein and

Robert Redford, whose baby this was from the first, as Woodward? Up to here, the proper responses would seem to be: yes, yes, yes and yes. But then even so-called straight documentaries have a way of bending under their makers' hands and a man could go mad searching for an utterly truthful cinematic record of history. Because what is history except a lot of documents and what some people think they remember? The caveats have been entered.

It was late in '74 that we saw Alan J. Pakula's *The Parallax View*, which had Warren Beatty in a fancy but nagging film as a Seattle reporter also doggedly concerned to get to the bottom of a giant US conspiracy. Pakula, a producer turned director, is an enormously painstaking, chameleon talent with a particular gift for that sudden switch that makes the everyday sinister. It would be hard to think of anyone better suited to the tacky, mammoth operation of steering *All the President's Men* on to public screens. William (Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid) Goldman did most of the script and is credited with it: his first version achieved the important feat of rendering down a mass of small incidents,

minor leads, little people caught between conscience and fear into a wearable storyline. The word goes it was too *Front Page* and wisecracking, though, and he did a couple more re-writes, which were in turn constantly readjusted by Pakula and others during the business of shooting. Watergate? The name of a complex containing the Democratic National Committee HQ, broken into one night in June 1972, by five men who were apprehended; Woodward was routinely sent to cover the courthouse proceedings and found one of the burglars had worked for the CIA; from then on it was one damn thing after another, hints followed by guesses beaverishly pursued by the relatively minor-league team that came to be known as 'Woodstein'. One of the shrewdest touches in the film comes in the uneasy establishment of a rapport between the reporters. Bernstein is thrusty, on the make, grabbing Woodward's pages as they land on another desk, going back to his own and tapping away. 'Just polishing it,' he explains when Woodward wants to know the why. A little later, there is Woodward/Redford peering round an office pillar, watching Bernstein/Hoffman's every move, eventually agreeing of the other fellow's copy, 'Yours is better'. There could have been beneficially more of this odd couple's interactions.

The plot thickens, with bigger and bigger names, men closer and closer to the President discovered involved. Sensibly, the only times we see some of the guilty (Nixon included) is via authentic newsreel or TV clips. Otherwise, we just hear them: stricken voices saying 'Good God!' as Woodward and Bernstein relentlessly bash away on the phone, or explaining - this is Kenneth H. Dahlberg, Midwest Finance Chairman of the Committee for the Re-election of the President - '... terrible ordeal ... my neighbour's wife has been kidnapped': he had been asked about a cheque bearing his name and turning up in a nefarious quarter. A lady librarian, again on the other end of a line, first agrees that Howard Hunt, consultant to the White House, had taken out books on Teddy Kennedy and Chappaquiddick; then rings back denying everything. In an unusual visual flourish, Pakula cuts from this to 'Woodstein' going through mounds of paper slips at the Library of Congress, the camera looking down on them in three higher and higher lapping dissolves, reduced figures in a circular maze of seats. Generally, the style of the piece is straightforward, with a degree of graininess sometimes apparent in Gordon Willis's photography, linking the actual clips with the fictions. After a dark and midnight encounter with Woodward's still anonymous contact, tagged 'Deep Throat' and referred to as his 'garage-freak' (since that is where they meet, subterraneanly), the scene is likely to snap back to the bright clarity of the newsroom. Once in a while, there is a dim, twilit slow-down, as when Dustin Hoffman is allowed to go through his paces in a crucial episode with a badly frightened book-keeper: edgily played by Jane Alexander, she is drawn into revealing details of the 'slush fund', or corruption money. This rather stands out from the staccato of the rest, as does another interlude involving Bernstein where he talks to a grinning crook-

ed lawyer, Segretti (Robert Walden, another finely found face), who has been in the dirty tricks department since college days.

Smacking off with a typewriter's keys hammering down with the amplified sound of axe-blows, ending some way before the book did with Nixon coming to power again on TV, the men banging at their machines in the background and then close-ups of wire-service news clattering out the subsequent fates of those other men, the President's, and even of his, the movie entertains: there is a sense, for one who has read the book, not so much of *déjà-lu* but of *déjà*, question mark, and that after two hours and 20 minutes of it. The final question would run something like this. For all the excellent performances (Jason Robards as Ben Bradlee, Executive Editor; Martin Balsam and Jack Warden as *Post* high-ups; the barely glimpsed Hal Holbrook as 'Deep Throat'; Stephen Collins as Hugh Sloan, Jr, the most honest chap around), and for all that the time passes swiftly, to what degree should we permit ourselves to be 'entertained' by a less than accurate account of moral squalor in top places?

David Greene's *The Count of Monte Cristo* must have been made for TV and probably as a series at that. Among those posing in this dummy Dumas - made two years ago in Cinecittà - are Richard Chamberlain as Dantès/Cristo, much given to kissing his fiancée in public before fate and four rotters dispatch him to 14 years in the Château d'If. 'Could it be that he had some business with ... (1-2-3-4) ... Napoleon?' sums up the level of dialogue-delivery; Tony Curtis proves an interestingly aberrant, huskily Brooklyn choice as the naughty general, Mondego; Trevor Howard passes through under more hair than *Hair* as the jailed Abbé Faria. I should have stayed out for the Count. The Canadian David Cronenberg's *Shivers*, known in Canada as 'The Parasite Murders', is diseased.

Jazz

Charles Fox

Trane Times

Chasin' The Trane: The Music and Mystique of John Coltrane by J. C. THOMAS *Elm Tree Books* £4.50

High Step (Paul Chambers/John Coltrane) *Blue Note BN-LA451-H2* (2 LPs) £5.00

The Stardust Session *Prestige PR24056* (2 LPs) £3.70

Giant Steps *Atlantic SD 1311* £3.29

My Favourite Things *Atlantic SD 1361* £3.29

A Love Supreme *Impulse IMPL 8001* £2.99

The Gentle Side of John Coltrane *Impulse IMPD 901* (2 LPs) £4.45

Achievements are what matter, not aspirations. And good artists can often be pushed into creativity by the oddest enthusiasms. Is

it important that Yeats was inclined to hedge when questioned about the Phases of the Moon? Similarly, when J. C. Thomas tells us that John Coltrane was constantly dipping into mystical literature (Kahlil Gibran seems to have been well up on his reading list) and how he once told a Japanese reporter that he wished he could become a saint, all we need do is play one of his records. Anyway, Thomas is dealing with the sanctimonious Sixties, years when the more ingenious artists bewailed the barriers - discipline, technique, talent - separating them from Absolute Truth.

Not that John Coltrane ever scorned technique. Indeed, at one time he constantly practised the most difficult scales - not just on the tenor saxophone but on piano and violin as well. And the mathematics of tonality underlay all his musical thinking. Nobody was more obsessed by the chord. Where most of his contemporaries cultivated the melodic springiness of Lester Young, Coltrane was fascinated by the way that an older musician, Coleman Hawkins, built his solos upon arpeggios. Even during the years just before his death, when he was consorting with 'free' jazz players, Coltrane remained scrupulously faithful to the logic of harmony.

Like many young black musicians of his generation, he had 'paid his dues', working with Bull Moose Jackson, with King Kolax, with Daisy Mae and the Hep-Cats, bands specialising in a fairly flamboyant species of rhythm-and-blues. In order to earn a living in the saloons of his hometown, Philadelphia, he had regularly 'walked the

GENERAL STRIKE REPORT

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Yorkshire Television

A member of the Trident Television Group

bar', gyrating his body as he marched from one end to the other, honking rather than playing his saxophone. Things began to change after he joined Miles Davis. Between then and the end of the Fifties he developed his own variant of arpeggio playing, running through scales based upon chords with such rapidity that critics called them 'sheets of sound'.

The Blue Note album was made under the leadership of Paul Chambers, a fellow member of the Miles Davis Quintet, who is featured in lengthy bass solos. The music is latterday bebop, bristling with abrupt chord changes, an approach Coltrane took to an extreme a few years later in 'Giant Steps', devising and improvising on a theme which could be called the equivalent of a treacherous rock-face. (The LP also includes 'Naima', one of Coltrane's most seductive compositions.) *The Stardust Session* dates from a couple of years later: this time the material consisted entirely of one-time pop songs, with Coltrane reshaping such unlikely pieces as 'Love Thy Neighbour' (Bing Crosby sang it to Carole Lombard in *We're Not Dressing*). Coltrane's ability to transform standard material got taken further in 'My Favourite Things'. Using a soprano saxophone (for the first time on one of his records, incidentally), he whittled the tune down to just a few chords, making it seem more like a raga than the hit-song from *The Sound of Music*.

This modal style of improvising, seeing between a couple of scales, was what Miles Davis was exploring at the end of the Fifties, and central to the music Coltrane made with his own quartet. There were fewer guide-lines; the soloist being left, almost literally, hanging in the air. And instead of the old rhythmic thrust and swing, the music often seemed to be standing still. Parallels with Indian improvising were obvious. And in Elvin Jones, Coltrane found a drummer whose rhythmic complexity was comparable with that of a tabla player. The result was mesmeric, incantatory, the saxophonist seeming to permute every harmonic possibility. A solo might last for as long as 45 minutes. One danger was that the repetition could become boring; instead of cutting a shape or developing a motif, the soloist might seem to be demonstrating a method. The virtues are at their clearest in *A Love Supreme*, a definitive as well as an inspired performance.

Not so very long after making *A Love Supreme*, Coltrane seemed to become uncertain of where he was heading. 'Only poets can understand it,' said Elvin Jones of the music being played when he left the quartet in March 1966. Just over a year later Coltrane was dead - from cancer of the liver. Although J. C. Thomas is a musician (in his time a percussionist with both the Stan Kenton Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony) he sheds no light on that final period, only offering some ecstatic quotations. Nor is he all that helpful about what went before - musically, at any rate.

There is, admittedly, a mass of information about Coltrane's early life, together with such odds-and-ends as the fact that the saxophonist would sit - in a Lotus position - before his TV, watching Harpo play harp solos in Marx Brothers movies. One learns that 'Alabama' is an elegy for four little

black girls killed by dynamite in a Baptist Church, and about the differing attitudes to recording of Coltrane and Duke Ellington when they went into a studio together (two tracks from that session, together with 'Alabama', can be found in *The Gentle Side of John Coltrane*). But among the drawbacks is an ungenerous attack on Ornette Coleman

and, nestling alongside the Sixties-style piety, a meticulous catalogue of which musicians took what drugs. The imprint of John Coltrane rests upon the playing of every saxophonist under 35; he has changed the way we listen to jazz. Surely he deserves something better than this hectic piece of hagiology.

In General

Mervyn Jones

Locked Out in Camden

Camden Lock has become well known over the past few years as a community of artists and craftsmen. There are jewellers, a sculptor, potters, a maker of hand-carved furniture, and a worker in fibre-glass. The workshops are in a medley of buildings beside the Regent's Canal; visitors are numerous now that the canal towpath has become a favourite walk for Londoners. The site was originally a timber-wharf, which became derelict when commercial canal traffic declined.

Many visitors imagine that Camden Lock is subsidised by the borough council, or the Arts Council or the British Tourist Board or somebody, but this isn't so. The tenants in the 13 workshops, and also the stallholders in the market which opens at weekends, pay rent to the Northside Development Co. Northside in turn has a lease, running from 1972 to 1982, from the British Waterways Board.

From the inception of Camden Lock in 1972, relations between Northside and the tenants have been edgy. The directors of Northside, a smallish but ambitious property company, evidently feel that they could be making more money from the site. Other features of Camden Lock are Dingwall's dance-hall, a restaurant and a café, and Northside has part-ownership of these, but the restaurant business hasn't been very profitable anywhere in London of late. Northside has drawn up plans for new buildings, including 40,000 square feet of offices and an entertainment centre, designed by the ubiquitous Colonel Richard Seifert. These plans have been opposed by the tenants and rejected by Camden council; an appeal to the Department of the Environment is to be heard in August.

In 1972 the tenants signed three-year leases at rents which varied slightly in individual cases, but were close to £1 a square foot. This meant about £500 a year for a typical workshop, a not inconsiderable sum for people who were seeking to attract a public for their wares, some of them being fresh out of art colleges. By commercial standards, the rents were low. However, these are full repairing leases and the tenants pay jointly for the upkeep of the courtyard garden which is an attractive feature of Camden Lock.

The leases ran out last November, and Northside proposes to set the new rent levels at about £3 a square foot (again with small

individual variations). The tenants have in general been pretty successful, but when one looks at the kind of work they do it's evident that trebled rents would be a severe blow. They exist, as artists or craftsmen must, by taking single orders each of which requires some thought to make a design that embodies a fresh idea or meets a customer's taste. To pay what's now suggested, they would have to turn out uniform products in assembly-line fashion - the jewellers, for instance, making one standardised silver ring after another. Or else they would have to give up space to retailing products made elsewhere, and in fact retailing has begun to creep into Camden Lock, although it's officially zoned for light industry and not for trade. Already one variegated shop has taken over premises vacated by a harpsichord maker.

A couple of newcomers have signed leases at the £3 level, but the original tenants see themselves doomed to move out in view of the impossibility of keeping to the style of work and the standards that they set themselves. Camden Lock, they predict, will become just a shopping precinct. So much the worse. London has plenty of boutiques, but is short on creative communities.

When I talked to Mr Peter Wheeler, one of Northside's two directors (the other is a busy doctor), he took the view that only one or two of the 13 tenants would have to move. 'The others will just have to work a bit harder,' he said. 'You see, these aren't serious businesses, just hobbies for young people who like to have a place where they can drink coffee with their friends.' He also says that the original rents were artificially low because the Lock was a doubtful venture; now that it's established, he's entitled to charge 'the going rate for this area'. To this argument the tenants reply that they are the people who made the venture a success. Serious or not, they've had their work selected at the Design Centre and at numerous exhibitions.

The company paid £30,000 for its ten-year lease from the Waterways Board, at a rental of £3,000 a year. Its rent income - from the workshops, from Dingwall's, and from the market stalls - is reckoned by Mr Wheeler at between £18,000 and £20,000 a year, with the workshop rents at the 'artificially low' level. Trebling these rents would raise Northside's income to over £40,000. 'It's

easy 'to make it look as though we're making a huge profit,' Mr Wheeler remarked. But, he pointed out, that takes no account of his office expenses and various overheads, such as advertising the market on commercial radio. And Northside is paying £12,000 a year interest on bank loans. It seems, however, that these loans were not incurred for the development of Camden Lock but for subsequent projects. Northside's office in

Commercial Place, the street leading to Camden Lock, is also given as the address of Housedale, the builders of new houses near Clapham Common.

If the artists do move out, it's probable that the premises will find new tenants at the higher rents, because Camden Lock by now attracts a host of strollers and even foreign tourists. Its character, however, would be completely changed.

Weekend Competition

No 2410 Set by E. O. Parrott

Remember those trash magazines in which the doings of, say, Lucretia Borgia could make headlines any week? Mr Parrott wonders what would happen if the popular hacks of today were unleashed on the royal vicissitudes of yesterday: the *Sunday Mirror* on Henry VIII's wives, the *News of the World* on Tony and Cleo? About 120 words by 14 May.

Result of No 2407 Set by John Digby

We wanted a Parnassian view of the Cup Final – from any writer, living or dead.

Report by Spiro Keats

A staggering preponderance of Southampton supporters among this week's entrants – but then NS competitors have always been poets, dreamers. (United will, of course, cream the Saints at Wembley.) A preponderance, too, of verse rather than prose – no doubt because, as Jethro B. Tucket points out, 'football just isn't cricket', and so needs to be more daringly recast. The rather witty headings are my own, for which I get lots of money. You get £6 each. Roger Woddiss, by the way, has come down like a kilo of bricks on Gerry Hamill, who, in his pastiche of Masfield's 'Sea Fever' last week, wrote 'I must go down to the seas again' instead of 'I must down to the seas again'. No 'go', Gerry.

The Parlement of Foules

With a greet and riotous armee from the north,
For the Coppe-bataille Manchestre fared forth
To Wemblye, wher a footebal-game they pleyde
Of swich an kynde as tendre herse dismeide.
Hir shertes reed as cherubines face,
Hir hertes blake as Satounes, foul and base;
And swich an haunt hadde they of

brutish wyles,
They passed hem of the scole of

Knobbeye Styles.
With sherte-pullyng and sondrie yvele japes,
They made the povre Southampton teme

hir apes.
Thogh Osgood smot a Unyted champioun,
He hurtleth Osgood with his boote adoun;
And swich was the Manchestre

sweperes vileynye,
McCallioges coillons henge in jupartie!

Unyted wonne, and, pleylny to ende my vers,
They lafte Southamptoun sittynge on hir ers;
In mordrous konnyng they beth so adept,
They sholde Manslaughtre Unyted been yclept!

DON THOMAS

Paradise Lost, 0-1

Their tumult ceased awhile, th'encircling
throng,

Agape with keen anticipation, see,
Like coloured marbles roll'd on the green sward
By young Olympians, th'opposing Teams
Now scatter as the Contest starts. Flies now,
As if some insect were caught in the Game
The Gods play with mere men, a

speckl'd sphere:
Nor does it come to rest in either net,
Though those who watch implore their

several Gods
It should be; some one end, t'other, some.
But wait awhile! when th'allotted Time's
Not half way done, Vict'ry attends one man:
Nor is't in vain! At last the argent Cup,
Spite foul attacks, is held up by his Chief.
Then, breaking loose, the herded hordes

run free:
Relieve themselves, drink deep, and savage all
Who in their path might accident'ly stray.
MARGARET ROGERS

The Convergence of the Twain

Within the loud arena's storied scope
Two factions wait
The inrush of their stalwarts, hot with hope
Of wresting fate
The way that two hours' booted strife
must arbitrate.

And when that time exhales, for some with glee
This day will end –
Too heart-high in their festival to see
The gloom descend
On others who must homewards then quite
listless wend.

And thus we watch the Doomsters' wan decree
For aye prevail:
If one hope flowers – one must, in like degree,
All tristly pale –
And one man's boon-tide ever breed
another's bale.
MAX GATE

The Valley of Bones

As though propelled by some Olympian deity – female no doubt – of the cult of reminiscence, determined to invoke the memory of Widmerpool, ill overcoated, trotting glumly through the inspissate mists of school days, a figure loomed towards the goal from the swirling, Turner-like vortex of drizzle covering the nether half of the field. He may have been the Southampton centre-forward. That could be ascertained later. The billowing jersey of the troubled figure (on reflection owing more to Goya than to Turner) had parted from the waistband of his shorts, heightening the illusion. At any moment, one felt, somebody – Stringham, Templer perhaps, both now victims of the, as it turned out, superdominant will of Widmerpool himself – would commence laughing nearby. The crowd roared, signifying that the figure had either scored or missed a goal – I was not to discover which until Pennistone's funeral the following year. . . .

JEFFREY LITTMAN



Assiac

Chess Board

No 1380

Hell For Leather

That was, pleasingly and commendably, the hallmark of this year's Birmingham Easter Congress, and the organisers Ritson Morry and Peter Griffiths told me that there were at most two or three 'G.M. draws' such as, alas, abundant in many other tournaments. Most games were fiercely and imaginatively contested, such as *Stean-Nunn* in the very first round.

1) d4,Ktf6; 2) c4,c5; 3) d5,e6; 4) Ktc3,ed; 5) cd;d6; 6) e4,g6; 7) Ktf3,Bg7; 8) Bg5,h6; 9) Bh4,g5; 10) Bg3,Kth5; 11) Bb5f,Kf8; 12) e5! A very promising P-sacrifice which, as Stean told me, was first dreamed up by Ray Keene, Ktg3; 13) fg;de; 14) 0-0,a6; 15) Be2,Ra7; 16) a4,b6; 17) Qb3,f5 Starting his vehement but by no means reckless counter-attack; 18) Ktd2,e4; 19) g4,Bd4f; 20) Kh1,e3; 21) Ktc4,f4; 22) Ktb6;Rb7; 23) a5,h5; 24) gh;Ktd7; 25) Ba6;Ktf6? Starting a sacrificial assault which Stean's cool and shrewd defence just manages to cope with; both players told me that 25) . . . Rh5! would have been better and probably successful though they hadn't quite analysed it yet through all its complications; 26) Bb7;Kth5: Many threats; 27) Kte2,Bg4; 28) Ktd4;Ktg3f; 29) Kg1,Rh2: This and the next move are the climax of Nunn's brilliant even though not successful conception; 30) Kh2; Qe8; 31) Kte6f,Be6; 32) Qe3! The saving grace, Qh5f; 33) Kg1, and plucky John resigned since after . . . Qh1; 34) Kf2,f; 35) Kg3,f;Qf1; 36) Rf1:f he just won't have any timber left.

Nunn didn't do well this time, but he should be commended for playing some particularly enterprising and imaginative chess; in the very last round he lost another plucky game to young Mestel thereby enabling Jonathan to get his well deserved first prize with 8 points. The Yugoslav grandmaster Damjanovic (only one unbeaten) came $\frac{1}{2}$ point behind, Stean and Speelman shared 3rd and 4th with a creditable 7 and Simon Webb got 6, as much as $2\frac{1}{2}$ points ahead of his next rivals. Eager youngsters (who, no doubt, learned a lot) where much in evidence, some sixty playing in the 'under-12' and 'under-14' section respectively and nearly 30 in each the 'under-16' and 'under 18'. With next week earmarked for Tony Miles, G.M. we'll have some more about Birmingham the week after. Meanwhile (Corden-Mestel, round 9) incisive brevity with Jonathan at his best.

1) e4,c5; 2) c3,b6; 3) d4,Bb7; 4) Bd3,Ktf6 5) Ktd2,g6; 6) Ktf3,Bg7; 7) 0-0,0-0; 8) Re1,d6; 9) Qe2,cd; 10) cd;Ktc6; 11) a3,Ktd7; 12) Qe3,e5; 13) d5,Ktd4; 14) b4,f5; 15) Ktd4;ed; 16) Qh3,Kte5; 17) ef;Ktd3f; 18) fg;Rf2!; 19) Qd3;Qh4; 20) gh;f,Kh8; 21) Qe4,Rf4, and White resigned since, obviously, 22) Qe2 fails against . . . d3.

The 4-pointer for beginners is a position achieved by our Yugoslav G.M. guest 13 years ago outwitting his Dutch opponent. Since an immediate 18) h3 fails against . . . Bd4f White hoped to 'shut the door by 18) e5, but he was forced to surrender in a couple of moves. Why? For 6 ladder-points B is a draw shrewdly achieved in a mere 3 moves. C (for 7) a draw too, a brand new miniature just published by *Schach-Echo*. Usual prizes, entries by 10 May.

A: Langeweg-Damjanovic 1963: /lr1qr1k1/3b1bbp/p2p2p1/k1pP4/4PPkt1/2Kt3P1/PBQKt2BP/4RRK1/.

B: V. M. Platov 1914: /2Kt5/5B2/8/4ktk1K/6kt1/4p3/16/.

C: Pogosianz 1976: /8/1Kt6/32/4pkB1/6bK/.

Report on No 1377

Set 9 April

A: Christian de Souza 1976: 1) . . . Kte4; 2) Qd1,Rh3!; 3) gh;??,Ktg3f.

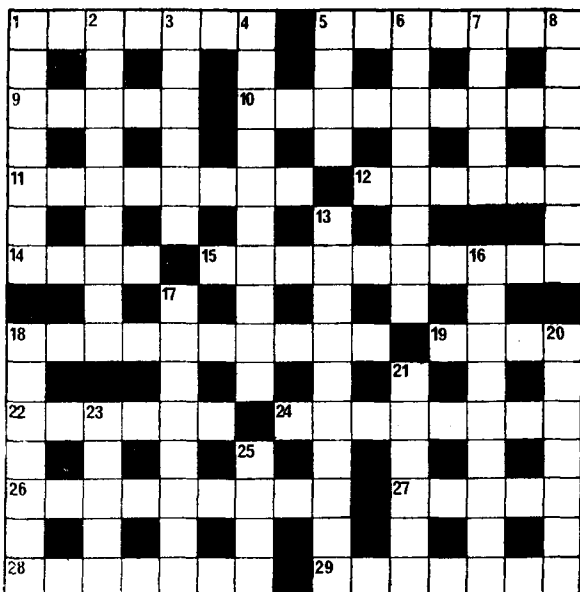
B: Adam Sobey 1976: 1) b6,Ktf3 (Kte2?); 2) b7,Bd4; 3) b8=Q,Kte5f; 4)Kd4;Ktc6f; 5) Kd5, Ktb8; 6) Kd6, and the P is unstoppable.

C: Gyorgy Paros 1934: 1) Bc1 (thr. Re2f), Kf7 (5); 2) f4f,Kf8 (6); 3) f5,Kf7; 4) f6,Kf8; 5) f7, etc.

Prizes: D. Berdy, M. J. Gill, P. Hodgson, J. D. Taylor, T. G. Whitworth.

Weekend Crossword 1162

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1162, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 11 May.



ACROSS

- Two kinds of meat to make a rugger international (7).
- Fabric made from two animals (7).
- Turn bloody when injured? (5).
- Vet starts entering mongrel terrier as sporting dog (9).
- 300 years' old but modern at heart (8).
- Weapon for King Henry's soldier (6).
- Take the lead back for the animals (4).
- Document to be shared in an unusual way (10).
- Sporting arenas which administer severe punishment? (4,6).
- To woo without love is extremely abrupt (4).
- Courage I show in return journeys (6).
- A large number of relatives are powerful men (8).
- Drive away in public and go beyond the airfield (9).
- After a second the furniture would be steady (5).

- A girl acted as an American insect (7).
- Looks embarrassed for Russian studies (7).

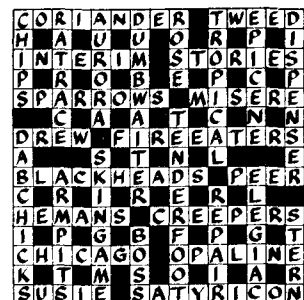
DOWN

- A heavenly body makes deity rise and take the lead (7).
- Worker for CD. in American HQ (9).
- Sits on the fence or barriers of a different kind (6).
- The delay keeps the speaker and me in silence (10).
- Clean up the city (4).
- Believer in a thousand-year reign (8).
- Bolt in and arrive too soon (5).
- Just the busybody to damage an allotment! (7).
- The history graduate is a thoroughly proficient person (10).
- Just and competent after being quite wrong (9).
- 'That stroke of death, which has — the gaiety of nations' (Johnson) (8).

- The part of the leg which holds an animal has something to kneel on (7).
- Canopies for examiners (7).
- Harmonising freely in duet (6).
- Composer of the wild tribe (5).
- Cover for a poet (4).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1160



Prizewinners to No 1160

- K. Edinborough (Colchester)
M. P. Marcus (Petts Wood)
H. G. A. Peters (Darwen)

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London Fire Brigade
GLC

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Vol. 91 No. 2354

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Entertainments

YOUNG MAPAM (Socialist Zionist Movement). May Day/Israel Independence Day Celebration. Join us for an evening of traditional folk poetry and humour. Guest artist: Earl Okin. Price: £1.50 includes refreshments and 1 glass of wine. 8 p.m. Sat. 1 May. 37 Broadhurst Gdns, NW6. All welc.

Theatres

EMBASSY THEATRE, Swiss Cottage. Embassy Studio 'The Late and Doctor Korczak and the Children' 4-8 May inclusive at 7.30 p.m. Embassy Theatre 'See How They Run' 11, 12, 13 at 7.30 p.m. Box Office opens 2-6 p.m. Tel. 722 8186.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE CLUB, 722 9301. Evgs 8.0. Sats 5 & 8. 'Lenz' by Mike Stott. LYTTELTON (New National Theatre). 928 2252. Tonight & Mon. 7.45. Tom. 2.30 & 7.45. 'John Gabriel Borkman' by Henrik Ibsen. Tues. 7.45. Wed. 2.30 & 7.45. 'No Man's Land'. Thurs. 7.45. 'Plunder'. Over 100 excellent seats on sale day of performance from 8.30 a.m.

ROYAL COURT, 730 1745. Evgs at 8. Sats 4 & 8 'Waiting for Godot' directed by Samuel Beckett. In German, from the Schiller Theater, Berlin.

THEATRE ROYAL, WINDSOR, 95 61107. From Tuesday. Francis Matthews, Angela Browne, Amanda Reiss in Alan Ayckbourn's 'Absurd Person Singular'.

Poetry

NATIONAL POETRY CENTRE, 21 Earl's Court Sq., SW5. Fri. 30 April 7.30 p.m. Soviet poet Evgeny Vinokurov.

THE POETS: George McBeth & John Fuller will read at 7.45 p.m. in The Wine Bar. The King's Arms Pub, Sloane Sq. SW1 on Wed. 5 May (nearest Tube Sloane Sq.). Entrance fee: 50p. Students 30p. OAPs 20p. (This event has been organised with financial assistance from the London Poetry Secretariat). Arranged by New Arena of Arts.

AN EVENING OF 'WORDS & MUSIC' given by the actress Hilary Liddell and the singer Edna Graham in the Presidential Room of the Irish Club, 82/83 Eaton Square, SW1 (nearest Tube Sloane Sq.) on Sunday, 2 May 8 p.m. Bar in Club. All welcome. (The Club is totally non-political). Arranged by the New Arena of Arts.

Independent Film-making in the '70s

A weekend conference at the Architectural Association on May 21, 22 and 23.

Organised by The Independent Film-makers Association and The Greater London Arts Association.

Sessions on: Funding Bodies and Funding Procedures; Regional Film Development; The British Future?; Film Criticism and Independent Film-making.

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Details from The Greater London Arts Association, 25/31 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SF.

Meetings

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY AND YOUNG SOCIALISTS

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G. HEALY (WRP Central Comm).
M. BANDA (WRP General Sec).
ALEX MITCHELL (Editor News-line).
EILEEN FEENEY (National YS Comm).

PRACTICAL BUDDHISM OF TIBET by Alfred Vial. Newcomers welcome. 7 p.m. Tues. 4 May. Tibet Society of the UK, 46 Belgrave Sq, SW1. 01-235 3720. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Mon. - Thurs. & Sat. Programme, details of facilities, crafts, etc. on request.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON: The second of a course of two lectures on the topic of 'Two Master Painters: Their view of myth and life' entitled: 'The Kleophrades Painter' will be given by Mr John Boardman (Merton College, Oxford) on 5 May 1976 at the Institute of Classical Studies (Lecture Theatre G6) 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1 at 5.30 p.m. Admission free, without ticket. Academic Register.

ADLERIAN SOCIETY: 'Life Under Extreme Oppression': Emerich Weissmann MD. Tues. 4 May 7.30 p.m. Alliance Hall, Palmer St. SW1. Visitors welcome 20p (Students 10p).

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY. Gordon McLennen, General Secretary of the Communist Party, on 'Britain's Crisis from a Socialist Perspective'. 7.30 p.m. 5 May. 5 Tavistock Place, WC1. Collection. All welc.

CELEBRATE 1 YEAR of peace in Vietnam on Friday, 30 April at 7 p.m. Holborn Assembly Rooms. Speaker: Lai Van Ngoc from the DRVN. Film: 'Eroica'. Salakta Balloons Band; Chris Searle; Mama's Rock; Vietnamese Food; Licensed Bar. Admission £1. Tickets at the door. All proceeds to British Hospital for Vietnam.

YOUNG MAPAM (Socialist Zionist Movement). 'Grapes of Wrath 1976'. Elaine Ellison, of the Nat. Farmworkers' Union of America, will introduce and show a film on the brutal treatment of the Californian farm labourers. Time: 8 p.m. Sun. 2 May. 37 Broadhurst Gdns, NW6. All welcome.

WALSLEY SOCIETY: Leslie Sklar. Walsley Memorial Lecture. 'The Road to Vietnam: Building Socialist Hegemony'. Conway Hall, Sunday 2 May at 2.45 p.m.

HEALTH EDUCATION. Wed. 5 May 7 p.m. House of Commons, room booked Arthur Blenkinsop MP. Dr Joan McMichael, Mr A. C. L. Mackie, Health Education Council. Socialist Medical Association.

RELIGIOUS OPPOSITION to Sexual Freedom. Public Meeting. Speakers: Helen Dobson, Alison Hennigan, Diane Munday. Barbara Smoker. Saxton Hall, London (St James' Park 'Ground') Fri. 7 May 7.30 p.m. Adm. free. Organisers: National Secular Society, 698 Holloway Road, London N19. 272 1266.

CELEBRATE MAY DAY. Public Meeting: For Revolution. Org. by Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). Chairman: Reg Birch. Sat. 8 May 7.30 p.m. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., WC1 (tube Holborn).

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, 58 Eccleston Square, London SW1. Sat. 3 p.m. 'Open Day'. Tues. 4 May 6.30 p.m. 'Introducing Buddhism'. Wed. 5 May 6.30 p.m. 'Mahayana Buddhism' & 'Theravada Buddhism' - two separate Study & Discussion Groups. All welcome. Send s.a.e. for full programme.

'THE DEFENCE OF RELIGION': Alan Redwood. Sun. 2 May 11 a.m. Tuesday Discussion on theme 'Mind and Brain' Tues. 4 May 7 p.m. 'Mind and Brain'. Prof. Robert Jones. South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., WC1. 01-242 8032.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE, 54 Holland Park, W11. Sun. 2 May 5 p.m. Swami Bhavyananda on 'The Katha Upanishad'. Wed. meeting at 6.45 p.m. All welc. Vedanta mag. 40p.

AFRICA CENTRE, 38 King St, WC2. 836 1973. 'The Church and Politics in Africa': talk by Sipho Magwaza. Wed. 5 May 6.30 p.m. Adm. 40p students 25p.

'BLACK YOUTH IN SCHOOLS & PRISONS' Howard League Meeting. Bev Woodroffe educationalist and member of Community Relations Commission. Thurs. 22 May 7 p.m. Mary Ward House, 5/7 Tavistock Place London WC1. Adm. 25p. Members free.

'WHITE LOTUS DAY': H. P. Blavatsky Commemoration. Sun. 2 May 8 p.m. All welcome. S.a.e. for programme, book list & literature. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

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